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Rubicon For The Negro South

Paul Ecker

Ideological Elements In The New
Criticism

Alan Dutscher

Effective Protest Versus Empty Words

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Extracts From An Interview With
Jacques Tati

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Paul Ecker

RUBICON FOR THE NEGRO SOUTH

The sit-down demonstrations by Southern Negro students at lunch-counters and restaurants has signalled the start of a new and decisive phase in the movement to eliminate the United States' own "apartheid" system. It is the phase in which the Negro himself, rather than the Supreme Court, the Department of Justice or even his own barrister, occupies the center of the stage. Barring a fascization of American society that appears increasingly beyond the ability of those who would produce it, he cannot but emerge victorious.

The century-old relics of a slave society are turning to dust before the long-delayed advance of industry into a land where cotton is no longer king and the cotton-picker no longer serf. Made brittle by the chemistry of economic change, they require only the force of social action to pulverize them. That force is now being applied.

The Civil War, an historically premature conflict that wiped out the South's slave society before Northern capital was ready to replace it, left the former slave-owners masters of a social vacuum. It took them ten years to hurl back the freedmen's effort to fill that vacuum with an agrarian democracy and impose in its place a hybrid brand of serfdom, supported by a network of discriminatory laws in clear defiance of the 14th Amendment. Northern industrialists, assured of unhindered access to the nation's western preserves by final defeat of the South's attempt to extend its slave empire, yawned at first, then provided active support to suppression of the Southern Negro as the best guarantee of "stabilization" and elimination of the Negro freeholder as a potential ally of agrarian democracy in the growing West. Less than two decades after the Emancipation Proclamation severed the bonds of slavery, the Negro's citizenship had become scarcely more than a juridical fiction. A skein of written and unwritten laws denied him the franchise and equal access to educational, recreational and other social facilities, deprived him of virtually all civil rights and tied him to the soil under a system of sharecropping and tenant farming that left him in a status akin to peonage. He subsisted on the margins of the South's reconstituted agricultural economy, from which he was siphoned only to form a reservoir for its menial labor.

This pattern of race relations, with its *alfresco's* of lynching, chain gangs and whippings, held without essential change until the 1940's, when Northern industry, after 150 years of American history, began to discover the South, its proximity to raw materials, its reservoir of cheap labor and its hostility to trade unionism. Post-war capital investment quickly spilled over the Mason-Dixon line, with many companies, led by the textiles, moving even existing plant and equip-

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ment—but not workers—to the new industrial frontier. They required a skilled and literate working force, black as well as white, unencumbered by the preposterous code of segregation. With them came the trade unions, including CIO organizations with no tradition of discrimination and a determination to add black as well as white dues-payers to their ranks. On the subjective side, matters were quickly moving in the same direction. Southern Negroes, who had discovered equality (if only of the barracks) in the Army or in northern war plants during World War II, returned to their homes less inclined to accept renewed subservience. The GI Bill of Rights opened the prospect of education and awakened consciousness for a growing number of Negroes for the first time. As the specific weight of the white farmer, landowner and petty merchants—the chief beneficiaries of Negro peonage—declined in the growingly industrial economy, the props of racial servitude began to falter.

The growing disinclination of the Negroes to continue accepting second-class citizenship found its first avenue of expression in the courts. Legal suits mushroomed against segregated transportation, schools and recreational facilities until the Supreme Court in 1954 issued a juridical death warrant against the system by reversing its 60-year-old "separate but equal" doctrine, the legacy of another era. But the warrant remained to be executed.

Its execution in the field of education, enforceable only through the cumbersome apparatus of the courts, has proved to be painfully slow. Six years after the Supreme Court's integration decision, only a handful of schools in North Carolina, Virginia and some border states have been forced to allow token integration of a few Negro students. Legal channels offer the prospect of a slow chipping away at the massive barrier of segregation in a manner that can only be frustrating to the great mass of Negroes who find themselves with no way of expressing their determination to win equal treatment. Negro students cannot sit down in a school.

The bus boycotts in Montgomery, Ala., and Tallahassee, Fla., provided an early indication of the dissatisfaction generated by the snail's pace of school integration. Despite their limited success, they showed that other channels of struggle against segregation were available—channels which not only offered the Negro more immediate prospects of success but which created a sense of conscious participation in a meaningful effort. For the first time, extra-legal methods of combatting segregation were employed on a wide scale, serving notice on the Southern neanderthals that the Negro population as a whole, not just the NAACP legal staff, was no longer willing to tolerate second-class citizenship. They also represented the first conscious introduction of the celebrated "passive resistance" techniques of Mahatma Gandhi on the American scene—in an arena where, ironically enough, they are far more appropriate than the one for which they were devised.

These techniques of "direct, non-violent action"—the strike, the boycott, the mass demonstration, the sit-down—are methods of tested

effectiveness that become pernicious only when they are fetishized into a first principle, a cornerstone of pacifist ideology. Non-violence as a cardinal rule of action, a subject for sermonizing, an inviolate morality regardless of provocation, is one thing; as a selected instrument employed to meet a specific situation, it is something else again. In the prevailing state of affairs in the South, where the Negroes are a distinct minority and violence, even in self-defense, can be an invitation to massacre, the weapons that Ghandi reified can be singularly *à propos*. This has been strikingly confirmed by the spontaneous origin of the lunch counter sit-downs by students acting without central direction or plan. The bold directness of their move has proved positively disarming to the guardians of color purity.

Though it originated spontaneously, direction of the sit-down movement has been taken over largely by the Congress of Racial Equality, an avowedly Ghandian organization that has waited eighteen years for its chance. It has organized boycotts, demonstrations and picket lines against stores refusing to serve Negroes. The movement, embracing Negro students throughout the South, has evoked widespread sympathy in the North, where it has produced picket lines, demonstrations and other manifestations of support from both Negroes and whites. Particularly noteworthy has been the response of white college students, who have disdained social involvement for two decades. But even more significant is the spirit of militant support that the movement has produced among the Southern Negro population as a whole, gripped so long by subservience and fear. This was strikingly demonstrated in a march by thousands of Nashville Negroes to protest the bombing of an attorney representing a group of arrested sit-downers. Manifestations of this support are convincing increasing segments of Southern white opinion that their "special" anachronistic institution cannot survive in any but the most attenuated form. Segregated lunch counters have fallen like tenpins in city after city, some under the mere threat of sit-downs or boycott. There is little question that segregated waiting rooms, drinking fountains, parks and swimming pools will be next on the list, despite diehard resisters. For the ranks of last-ditch opposition are being gradually deserted by "influential" circles of upper-class and upper middle-class opinion, concerned more with "business" considerations than with decreasingly relevant factors of racial status. While continuing to give lip service to segregation, they seek increasingly for compromise, decry the "extremists" (on both sides, of course) and try to cushion the impact of segregation while limiting its extent. Thus, side by side with the vigilante White Citizens Councils, have arisen the mothers' committees which, while professing to take no stand on integration versus segregation, are campaigning vigorously against the segregationists' rule-or-ruin policy of closing integrated schools. With notable exceptions, the "business community", chambers of commerce, merchant groups, *et al*, have been deserting the banner of segregation under the pressure of militant Negro action, for while cheap labor based on Negro impoverishment has been a major lure for migrating industry, disruption of the com-

munity's social and economic fabric by racial strife is self-defeating. Little Rock suffered severely in the competition for new factories in the three-year battle over school integration; the lesson was not lost on business circles in other areas. For them, segregation becomes increasingly a luxury not worth fighting for.

All this ground has been gained, moreover, with only the Negroes' advance guard, so to speak, in action. Except for the isolated bus boycotts, only the Negro upper middle class and intellectuals have been drawn into the campaign. It is the children of well-to-do Negroes, principally, who have become the phalanx of school integration; their older brothers and sisters have been carrying on the lunch-counter sit-downs. But the emergence of youth on the second level of resistance has introduced a decisive new quality; many of them acted against the express wishes of their elders. Old-line Negro leaders, immersed in a philosophy of gradualism, opposed the sit-downs in their early stages. NAACP leaders, accustomed to viewing the integration struggle through a legal prism, joined college presidents caught between two fires in counselling moderation. But they have been caught up in a tide that they could resist only at their own peril.

For, unlike the school integration battle, remote to many Negroes, the sit-down demonstrations have captured the imagination of hitherto unaffected segments of the South's great colored population. Of striking significance was the visit of a delegation of North Carolina Negro sharecroppers to officials of a college whose students had been dispersed by fire hoses in an anti-discrimination demonstration. They came, unsolicited, to offer their help—and wanted to know how to help. The college officials, needless to say, were unable to tell them.

The incident highlighted more than the awakening of the long-mute Southern Negro. It silhouetted the failure of those who have taken direction of the movement to organize this inchoate element into an integral part of it. Activation of the passive support prevailing among the great mass of the southern Negro population for the sit-down demonstrators would go a long way toward shortening what otherwise promises to be a long and painful even if ultimately victorious struggle. The students who have acted with great courage and sacrifice deserve more than applause from the grandstand; they have won much virtually unaided; but full realization of the opportunity now at hand will require more than their participation. The stage is set for the collapse of a century-old system of humiliation and oppression; but if the drama is to be played out to the full, the participation of all the actors will be required. Northern capital, which today holds the key to southern social life, cannot countenance racial upheaval on its new frontier; the South will find before long that political freedom for the Negro is the price of its ticket to the 20th Century.

May 23, 1960.

Ernst Zander

ON THE "INNER LIMIT" OF CAPITALISM

Introductory Note

This unfortunately unfinished work was originally written by Zander in the course of his discussion* of various points made by Mackiewicz.** Having reached the point at which it now breaks off, Zander reconsidered the matter, decided that the subject deserved independent treatment, and left the entire section out of the article he was then writing, intending to work it up into a finished piece at some later date. This he did not live to do.

The work grows out of a consideration of Mackiewicz's attempt to present the West (essentially, America) as the "lesser evil" as against Russia, and of his call for a "war of liberation" by the West against Russia. Using mainly the material provided by Mackiewicz himself, Zander shows how Mackiewicz, notwithstanding his desire to present America in the favourable aspect of "the lesser evil", is compelled by the very evidence he marshals to throw light on the fact that there exists a community of interest between America and Russia. It is this community of interest, arising out of their competition for world monopoly, that enables and forces them to act in planned or unplanned concert against any third party that threatens them both, and share the spoils of these operations. In short, Zander makes it plain that Mackiewicz proves the opposite of what he would fain believe, namely, that his supposed "lesser evil" (the American "policeman") is in reality of one flesh with the "greater evil" (the Russian "criminal"). Zander then continues:

A correctly chosen lesser evil . . . is characterized by an accompanying action in the course of which *the lesser evil itself disappears*. If I "choose" it as a genuine lesser evil, I imply the fight against *both*, or the whole operation becomes senseless. What sense would there be, for example, in distinguishing between first and third stage syphilis in two patients without *immediately* starting on the right cure for both stages? A conscientious doctor rightly places most value on healing cancer, tuberculosis, syphilis, etc., in the initial stage in order to prevent greater harm and possibly death. Every day lost in combating the greater evil allows the lesser evil to grow and hurls

* In "War as a Way Out?", *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 2, No. 7, Autumn, 1950.

**In "I am Proud to be Called a 'Warmonger'", *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 2, No. 6, Summer, 1950.

us back to the greater evil. Actually, in political practice the philosophy of the lesser evil reduces itself to the nonsensical operation of always causing the greater evil to grow stronger. Unfortunately, the position in politics is not even as relatively "favourable" as in the case of the aforementioned diseases, where the neglected patient might indeed lose a lung but eventually can still be "saved". In the political reality of our bourgeois world the sorry situation is such that universal competition is an ever spreading pestilence and with the destruction of each competitor, reproduces all social evils on a *broad* basis. With the hydrogen bomb we already arrive at total self-destruction unless we finally repudiate the supposedly lesser evil which is the source of all catastrophes and of a catastrophe each time *more extensive*.

Whence follows the conclusion relative to the "war of liberation":

... Has not Mackiewicz recognized with us and has he not thoroughly demonstrated in his article that "Bolshevism" is a highly recompensed agent and executor of "democracy", that is, the *police-man of America*? Are we not dealing (as we already know) with two bands of police-gangsters of which the "democratic" is the real ring-leader which cunningly leaves its deeper interests to be taken care of by the "Bolshevist" gang? Under these circumstances is there anything "meritorious" in seeking by "war-mongering" to induce the democratically-coloured "yesterday's Nuremberg judges and alleged liberators of peoples" to betray their "Bolshevistically"-coloured managers in the name of a new "liberation of other peoples"? Is such betrayal of one scoundrel by another, not real Stalinist "art"? It is possible to defend such "warmongering" for "political and for moral reasons", unless we simply mean by it *gangster politics and gangster morality*? Is it not political insanity to entrust ourselves to a police which we have identified and exposed unequivocally and conclusively as criminals? Are the lessons of two world wars still not sufficient for us? And must we not draw the "disastrous" conclusion from Mackiewicz's defence of the gangster war that he does indeed know how to reconcile himself with the bandit police just as well as the latter do with the "greater" evil established by themselves and for their own ends?

Such really is the logical consequence of the philosophy of the lesser evil by which Mackiewicz has unwittingly been trapped. He has unawares adopted the greater evil. . . .

It is at this point that the present work begins.

The ten years that have passed since it was written have made it only the more topical by proving ever more clearly the correctness of its essential message, viz., that capitalism can only ruin the world the more completely, the longer it endures, and that the only substantial choice that remains to humanity is that between universal poverty and slavery (if not utter destruction by war) and the replacement of profit production by production for use.

On one important detail events appear at first glance to have given the lie to Zander's assertions about the nature of capitalism. He writes, in connection with Russia, of the "permanently extended slavery". This is no longer correct; at the moment the slave camps have given place to milder forms of forced labour, owing to the fact that outright slave labour has, for the time being at any rate, outlived its usefulness, i.e. is no longer sufficiently profitable. Nonetheless, the recession of this phenomenon in Russia is compensated for by its appearance elsewhere. China, in particular, becomes the scene of a

tyranny (the so-called "communes") which dwarfs even the bestialities of Stalin. Instead of the seven million Russian slaves (now enjoying a less rigorous captivity), there are *hundreds of millions* of Chinese who live in the most barbaric conditions of slavery. Moreover, it must not be overlooked that conditions akin to slavery (though not so designated) have become the lot of untold numbers of people in all countries in Eastern Europe since the war. Nor is this all: Forms of slave labour increasingly make their appearance in Africa. In Algeria, for example, it is estimated, at least two million Arab "refugees" live in species of concentration camps at the mercy of the French army of occupation; in South Africa, the enslavement of the African majority is being pushed forward with all possible speed; in Ghana, "collectivization" is being set in train by the ex-Stalinist dictator, Nkrumah. And with this one still has not reckoned in North Korea, Northern Indochina, Tibet and so on.

All in all, the balance on the matter of slavery reads: The "losses" sustained in Russia have more than been made up by heavy "gains" elsewhere. Whence the conclusion imposes itself: However much Zander may have been mistaken about the course of the Russian outbreak of this gruesome phenomenon, his insistence that permanently extended slavery (and impoverishment, which is its basis) is the *necessary* accompaniment of the decay of the capitalist system, hence a general or world-wide, and not a particular or local, phenomenon, is shown to have been essentially correct.

As for the question of increasing universal poverty, it is simply a fact that the fantastic "blossoming" of modern science and technology, under the sway of profit and competition in forms ever more remote from and inimical to human welfare (as much in the "advanced" countries with their supposedly "high standard of living" as elsewhere), has, on balance, yielded only the result: The per capita income of humanity as a whole (which measurement, of course, conceals the grossest inequality between rich and poor, particularly in its international aspect) is to-day lower than it was in 1900, and can only sink lower, so long as profit and competition determine the nature, quantity and quality of production. This quantitative measure of the increasing pauperization of the majority of mankind (proof, by the way, of Marx's prophetically correct analysis of the essential development of capitalism) by no means depicts the full horror of the situation, which becomes clear only when one adds in that the *quality* of the necessities of life has simultaneously fallen disastrously (particularly gruesome, in this connection, being the fact that food is today without exception poisoned, the "purer" (chemically less adulterated) being perhaps more dangerous than the sophisticated chemicalized kind, because more highly contaminated by radio-activity).

The qualitative aspect comes to the fore in the advanced countries, where the bulk of the population has a quantitative sufficiency (if not an excess, which is pernicious in its own way) of the necessities of

life. A whole book could be written to show the utter meaninglessness nowadays of the phrase "standard of living". Here, unfortunately, only the briefest outline can be given. "Standard of living" is capitalist "standard of living", namely, refers to the mere accumulation of goods for the sake of their accumulation (sheer quantity), quite independently of their quality (in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred literally nothing but poison), and quite irrespective of their possible relevance to reasonable (humane or healthy) existence. Illusions notwithstanding, capitalist "high standard of living" is a plague, the effects of which daily afflict the wealthy countries. Innumerable are the evils this "plenty" brings with it and constantly increases, such that instead of freeing people for full existence, it oppresses them, burdens them with *artificial* physical and spiritual "needs" (rationally considered, in most cases symptomatic only of physical and spiritual sickness), the "satisfaction" of which is often literally but another nail in the coffin, and finally destroys them. Unusually interesting for whoever wishes to grasp the basically unnatural and destructive essence of profit and competition in their, so to speak, "pure" form of mere spurring to activity (independently, that is, of the nature of the activity itself), is the contention of H. J. Speedy (*The 20th Century and Your Heart*):

It seems to be certain that one of the causes of diseases of the heart arteries is the inability or lack of desire to attain psychic relaxation in young men. If they have no hobbies, such as tennis, golf or gardening *purely for the fun of the thing*, but rather from a need to shine; if they go in for sport simply with the idea of breaking records; if they work more intensively than is really necessary to make a living, but merely for increasing their income—then the heart will be more susceptible to sclerosis of the arteries. The victims of this disease, *as a rule*, lack the creative [*sic!*] impulse *per se*; they have no disinterested [*sic!*] impulses, *no* spontaneous [*sic!*] inspiration. . . . [Italics mine—A.M.]

Such are the "benefits" of "healthy" competition in capitalist society! To return: "Standard of living", strictly speaking, is a measure of *scarcity*, the basis of which is of necessity *general* poverty. As a concept it is, therefore, as obsolete as the scarcity which capitalism maintains is artificial, and will vanish once poverty has been eliminated the world over following the transformation of profit production into production for use (for the satisfaction of human needs), to be replaced by—*living*, viz., free, all-sided development of human potentialities on the basis of universal wealth.

For obvious reasons, it is the quantitative aspect that is at present decisive in underdeveloped countries. The catastrophe implicit here is to some extent brought out in the following remarks by J. Davy (science correspondent of the *Observer*) published on 4th September, 1960, under the heading "Is Mass Starvation Inevitable?":

The population of the world is expected to double by the end of the century. Behind this simple and oft-repeated fact are some appalling uncertainties [read: certainties, if capitalism continue in being—A.M.]. The pessimists [those who think capitalism the final

stage of social evolution and hence see no way out—A.M.] believe mass starvation is now virtually inevitable. The optimists [those who understand nothing of the nature of capitalism, while believing in its finality—A.M.] believe applied science [!] can avert catastrophe. But all agree that it will be a race against time [!]. . . .

In a sense, it is science which has produced the present problem [not so; it is the *application* of science in a one-sided manner under the domination of profit and competition that has helped to produce the problem—A.M.]. Modern medicine has reduced the death-rate without affecting the birth-rate [which is less a medical than a *social* question—A.M.]. The latest, and most drastic development has been the virtual eradication of malaria from huge areas of the world. The full effects have still to be observed, but in Mauritius, for instance, a fairly stable population of about 400,000 has suddenly soared by at least 25 per cent since 1950, following the anti-malaria campaign. The dilemma created by medical science [!] can in principle be resolved by agricultural science [another illusion, as will be seen below—A.M.]. Dr. Colin Clark has calculated that the world could support at least 28 billion people—ten times the present number—if all available land were farmed as scientifically [!] as the Dutch now farm theirs. The hunger problem—leaving aside other questions of overcrowding—then resolves itself into one of raising the standards of farming to match the increase in population [if, of course, one accepts the false premise—A.M.].

Can this conceivably be done fast enough? Here we encounter the appalling lop-sidedness which afflicts the world [it is not "lop-sidedness" that afflicts the world, but profit production which is lop-sidedness personified—A.M.]. The population explosion is occurring not where there is sophisticated [!] agriculture and food surpluses but where life is already at a bare subsistence level [if that!—A.M.], and primitive farming threatens to exhaust the soil still further. [To correct this: *Sophisticated* (industrial) agriculture has completely exhausted the soil and relies on chemicals to produce "food"—primitive farming, so-called, exhausts the soil not because of its *methods* (unlike sophisticated agriculture) but because the pressure of population, wars and civil wars, state interference, and a thousand other *capitalist-engendered* evils, result in a *break-down* of traditional methods, in a frenzied attempt to grow more food *coûte que coûte*, not to mention *cash* crops instead of food, than the land can yield.—A.M.]. The nightmare prospect is of one half of the world growing richer while the other half submerges under the weight of its own numbers into near or actual starvation [this is already a reality, and not merely a "prospect"—A.M.].

To redress the balance, to extricate the underdeveloped parts of the world from the threat of a descending spiral of poverty, the techniques, the capital, and the material surpluses of the richer countries must flow to the poorer. This is clearly enough recognized in theory; it is alarming to realize how difficult it is in practice.

To begin with, it seems [no: *is*—A.M.] impossible to move the food surpluses of the West to the impoverished East without "upsetting the market" [without, that is, "upsetting" "sophisticated" *capitalist* agriculture in the West, which is concerned only with making a *profit*, and which will without hesitation condemn half mankind to starvation, when profit requires, as it does today, the "market" to be "supported" in this way; which is why surpluses and starvation must remain, as they have always been, inescapable in capitalist society—A.M.]. . . . The poor countries, it is agreed [?], need a scientific revolution to avoid starvation. And their main need is for agricultural science. They must look to the industrialized countries

for this knowledge and for expert help.* But the main scientific effort in the West—and even [!] in Russia—is now focused on quite different problems [an illusion: the “problem” remains the same, that of making profit; only the form has altered—A.M.].

The industrial countries are embarking upon a new technical and scientific revolution. There are the development of automation, the exploitation of electronic control of factories; revolutions in transport (supersonic flight), and in power production (atomic energy). There is the military revolution, absorbing in the missile industries a huge amount of capital and scientific manpower. And there is the most recent arrival, the “space age”, into which the wealthy nations seem [are—A.M.] ready to pour unprecedented resources. [On most of which, see Zander's remarks in the closing passage of his article.—A.M.]

It is often argued that these activities make the rich nations richer so that they will be the more able to help the poor nations. This may be so. But at the same time, it is undeniable that the focus of attention in the scientific and technical worlds is on problems *which are largely irrelevant to those of the underdeveloped countries* [my italics—A.M.].

This affects the whole structure of scientific education in the West and the whole cast of mind, so to speak, of the young scientist. A space-and-atom-minded society may become very rich—but it will not be well equipped to help the poor [italics mine—A.M.].

This does not mean, of course, that the West should abandon its advanced technologies and concentrate on tractor building [!]. Nevertheless, it looks as though the coming years are going to demand technical assistance to the underdeveloped areas on a scale and of an intensity which we [!] have as yet scarcely begun to contemplate. This is likely to demand a generation of young scientists with a quite new outlook.

In Britain, the present drive for more scientists is backed up by an image of the white-coated atomic physicist or the intrepid astronaut. There is every incentive for an aspiring scientist to devote his life to rockets or electronic computers [in which there is much profit to be

*To correct this: Nothing could be more disastrous than the wholesale application of present-day capitalist-determined so-called “agricultural science” (the mere thoughtless attempt to replace Nature by chemistry in the quest for profit) as a “solution” of the fateful question of land-utilization in underdeveloped countries. (*En passant*: it is simply wrong to write as though industrially underdeveloped countries were *ipso facto* agriculturally underdeveloped. The fact is that the most underdeveloped countries, from the point of view of rational agriculture, are the advanced countries.) Agricultural science proper remains still to be created, especially in the West (including Russia), out of all existing knowledge (much of which now existing as daily practice only in the underdeveloped countries of the East!) by a radical severance of it from all profit considerations. That is to say: The question of hunger (land-utilization, though this is by no means the only matter involved) is in no way mainly one of agricultural science; rather, both hunger and capitalist agriculture are social questions, the solution of which is inseparable from the dissolution of capitalism into production for use. The attempt to overcome hunger on a world scale while capitalism remains is at best an illusion, productive of only quack recipes and plaster-cures, instead of the urgently needed radical surgery; at worst, ideological mendacity (as in the case of Eisenhower's “new” proposal for “massive” “aid” to the underdeveloped countries) in the interests of preserving the status quo with its obsolete minority monopoly of wealth.

made!—A.M.], and very little incentive to go in for locust control or soil chemistry [quite unprofitable on any scale—A.M.].

The effects of this image [the "image" in "scientific form" of profit and competition!—A.M.] are far-reaching [they reach to the ends of the wholly-capitalist world—A.M.]. In the newly independent countries, there is a natural tendency to see science as the West sees it [nothing natural about it, it being simply the tendency of *unnatural* competition and profit, which is why the "scientific revolution", supposedly needed "to avoid starvation", will have exactly the opposite effect, to the extent that it comes about under the auspices of profit and competition—A.M.]. New states have been showing disturbing signs of measuring scientific status [competition works its disastrous "wonders" in all spheres—A.M.] by the possession or non-possession of a small atomic reactor [which the advanced countries, particularly Britain and America, are only too eager to *sell* to them—A.M.]. One of the most useful achievements [!] of a conference between leading scientists and representatives of underdeveloped countries which has just ended in Israel was to explode this notion [which "explosion" will be far less explosive than the desire of America to dispose of its surplus uranium at a profit on the one hand, and the desire of the new ruling minorities to "cut a figure" in the capitalist world on the other—A.M.].

If the British Association symposium helps to produce a healthier sense of priorities, it will have performed a valuable task.

If it must be considered a much-delayed gain that the terrible realities in store for the majority of mankind have affected consciousness to the extent of causing the British Association for the Advancement of Science to question seriously the usefulness to humanity in its present travail of recent tendencies in science and technology, it must at once be added: So long as the cause of the unhealthy priorities be not correctly perceived, the attempt to replace these by the desired healthier ones will be frustrated, and the catastrophe, mass starvation, impossible to avert. Unfortunately, the general ignorance of even the most elementary aspects of political-economy (*scientific* sociology, in contrast to the almost worthless rubbish nowadays purveyed under the several heads, "economics", "sociology", "politics") gives no encouragement to the hope that scientists, who are, as a general rule, complete ignoramuses outside their narrow specializations and at the mercy of every quack "expert", will, for all their good intentions, correctly perceive the root of the evil they wish to eradicate.

How far the evil has already developed, one glance at the political state of the world makes clear: On the basis of worsening poverty, artificially induced and maintained, totalitarianism makes great strides; having already infected Russia (where, despite a certain amelioration in conditions, it remains in being), Eastern Europe (by agreement with the "Allies"), Spain (with the help of the West and Russia), China (delivered to Mao-Tse-Tung by Marshall as part of American policy for the stabilization of the post-war world), South America (where the crass poverty, for which America is largely responsible, returns all attempts at the democratization of political life back to their starting point), it now, like a cancer in the world body politic, experiences fresh metastases and breaks out in *new*

attacks: France, Pakistan, Sudan, Turkey, Ghana, Indonesia, Indochina, Tibet, Ceylon and so on; while in the remaining formally democratic countries, constant eruptions bespeak the disease, so to say, subcutaneously, at work*

This is not the place to evaluate the positive and negative aspects of current events in their bearing upon the balance of power, upon the plans of the many competitors in the struggle for survival and, most important, upon the actual possibilities of overcoming the capitalist system in a progressive direction and ushering in the millenium which all informed persons nowadays agree to be in principle attainable. What is here in question is only the overall balance of the system, at this stage of its life-cycle necessarily negative, as it strives to satisfy its yearning for stability. Here, everything year by year more strikingly supports Zander's insight (of which the article that follows is the most elaborate published exposition) that this longed-for "stabilization", the negative goal of capitalism, is identical with its self-dissolution into universal slavery upon a different economic basis (simple reproduction), a self-dissolution accompanied everywhere by unimaginable suffering and destruction of natural and human resources; in other words, means the retrogression of human society to forms long since overcome in mankind's laborious, slow, painful and tortuous ascent towards maturity. But this insight, because it allows of no equivocation about the *absolutely* retrogressive nature of contemporary capitalism, throws into relief what the progressive solution of society's problems *must* be, if there is actually to be one at all (Zander, with characteristic lack of facile optimism, leaves this open, while insisting that all means lie to hand) and is, by that very fact, a decisive step in the achievement of that solution.

Andrew Maxwell.

* One of the most recent eruptions (a telling example): Kenneth Tynan, drama critic of the *Observer* "says that he was called before the [Internal Security Sub-committee of the United States Senate] on May 5 and questioned in closed session on two matters: his part in the preparation of a British [!] television programme on non-conformity in America, 'We Dissent', and his decision (in company with a number of well-known writers . . .) to lend his signature to an advertisement in the *New York Times* pleading for fair treatment of Cuba in the American press.

"In the course of the interrogation Mr. Tynan was asked how he had contacted controversial Americans who appeared on the television film, with whom he had discussed it in England [!], and whether it had been deliberately slanted [!] against the United States [nobody in the world is allowed to be critical of "God's own country"—A.M.].

"... The committee . . . [asked] if Mr. Tynan had been paid for his signature 'in Cuban gold' and whether he was aware that President Eisenhower had publicly [!] denounced the Castro régime as a menace to the Western hemisphere.

"Did Mr. Tynan think himself justified [*sic*!] in holding opinions [!] that openly defied [!] those of the President of the United States? . . ."

The openly *fascist* nature of this attempt to regiment opinion by browbeating people who dare to hold an opinion different from the approved

In political respects it is most advisable to introduce a big "but" after each sentence of the applied theory of the lesser evil, i.e. it is necessary 50 times over to have seen through this most cunning of all sanctifications of the means by the end, before one can be comparatively certain of not having been deceived by the sham halo of sanctity. Unfortunately for our "community", means and ends diverge to "such an extent" under conditions of commodity economy or general competition, that the means become ends and the end transforms itself into new means. The word "production", for example, immediately evokes the idea of production for some useful end. "But" the useful end is in bourgeois society merely an appearance—a pretext which conceals the "inner essence" of the capitalist mode of production. The hidden end is *profit*, openly admitted to be the driving force by capitalist entrepreneurs, and only "concealed" or surrounded with a false halo by *identifying* it with the *general* usefulness (of social consumption in its different forms) and presenting it as the expression of "*the human nature*". Where this end now is not achieved or cannot be achieved in a sufficient "proportion" (the problem of "minimum prices"), production transforms itself to such a degree into an independent *means* for making profit in the adequate proportion, that the sham of an haloed end disappears completely. Production and consumption then diverge insuperably: The means take on the appearance of ends in themselves and take their own course into disproportions, market fluctuations and crises.

Let us consider the problem more closely. We are told that profit-making free competition is the best *means* of securing freedom, progress and *general* welfare; the disadvantages of the system, "sound as a whole", should be accepted for the sake of its enormous advantages and can be overcome "step-by-step". Apologetic conclusion: This system conforms with profit-seeking human nature; everything will collapse if "man's" striving for profit finds no satisfaction. Practical application of the apologetic conclusion: Only the capitalist is representative of human nature; he who does not understand how to make profit is not a human being or not sufficiently a human being (e.g. the "failures", the recently destroyed competitors) and has himself to blame for inhuman treatment on the part of the natural system.¹

"opinion" (the illiterate ignoramus, Eisenhower, is, typically, "the one who knows"), the base slander ("Cuban gold") in the best Stalinist tradition with its suggestion that it is impossible *honestly* to hold opinions other than the official one, are so plain as to make further comment superfluous, other than: How it is possible still to believe that there is any *fundamental* difference between Russian and American society (between "Western democracy" and "Communism"), when this and a mountain of other evidence continually prove the opposite?

1. The laws of human nature are "naturally" the laws of God who also did not forget to find himself a niche in profit. Thus Edmund Burke whom Marx selected as the prototype of the "ordinary bourgeois": "The laws of commerce are the laws of nature and therefore the laws of God".

In the grey everyday of capitalist society, we encounter only the practical application of the apologetic conclusion, whereas the opposite is true with regard to the "means" as the presupposition of general welfare. Four-fifths of humanity have no direct or indirect (as parasites) share in "profit". They come into contact with profit only in so far as it is squeezed out of them. They are merely material for the system and are treated accordingly.

"Indeed", capitalism would break its own neck were it somehow to promote *general* welfare, and were it to make it possible for even not more than five out of a thousand people on earth to become capitalists. Thus the reverse: The general misery and its reproduction in *ever greater extent*; the *diminution* of the number of real capitalists and the fantastic growth of the parasitic strata—these are the organic conditions of the capitalist mode of production and of its preservation.

Means and ends change places in the capitalist process—the reproduction and increase of mass misery are the only means available to capitalist production of realising profit as an end in itself. In it means and end are identical only in so far as production takes place for profit; but it is only very *indirectly* connected with consumption as the proper purpose of production and can fail of it completely. In moral terms, that is to say, measured against the unctuous phrases of its apologists, the profit system as a means of securing *general* welfare is a monstrous lie.² Moreover, as a system for the production of profit, it suffers from an insuperable inner contradiction which most clearly manifests itself in the catastrophic effects of universal competition.

The notion "life" also embraces an inner contradiction (a contradiction in itself: living means dying); but it is at any moment an identical, "rational", necessary, irrevocable and intrinsic contradiction, inseparable from all life in general. "Free" competition in capitalism, on the other hand, is not merely a contradiction in itself, but also an absurd, "irrational", historical, revocable contradiction, belonging to *capitalist* production only, and not to production or to the material conditions of existence of human society as such. The individual death is the natural conclusion of life and is "from the outset" (thus without external violent interference) not contrary to the phenomenon of life or its higher development. It is otherwise with "free" competition, which does not shape production as such but only a certain stage in its development (somewhere between its

2. In no country is the standard phrase regarding the blessings of "free" enterprise more expatiated upon than in America, and in no country has it more vulgar, dishonest and apologetic effect. What is the content of the "American way of life", the praises of which are disseminated over the world, announced by all loudspeakers, scattered to the four winds by an atrocious Press? It is chewing gum—the utmost flattening out of just the bad sides of a system which destroyed Europe's glory and which will cause American democracy to perish in even more disgusting forms, if we persist in the "lesser evil".

adolescence and its maturity). With every ruined competitor it affects not only itself but the future of production in general. From a certain point on it frustrates production and its further development *altogether*, and destroys, together with itself, also production, which it does not bring to its "natural" conclusion, but strives to transform with its self-destruction into its historically lower-lying direct opposite, into slave economy without competition.

Free competition dwells in the body of profit economy like a consumptive disease of which the symptoms appear sometimes here, sometimes there, sometimes recede, sometimes increase, but which breaks out always more violently, attacks with every outbreak increasingly bigger parts, and eventually eats away the whole body and deforms it beyond recognition. Fascism in Russia has to be regarded as a colossal deformation due to this disease and like the rest of the fascist and semi-fascist systems, by no means a product of "Bolshevism" (the absurdity of the legend of Bolshevism becomes evident in the study of German fascism) or of a force alien to the "inner essence" of bourgeois society. Russia merely displays to us the utmost devastation caused by a disease, the symptoms and deformations of which are observable in all countries, including the "fully democratic" ones, in the form of mass unemployment, non-usability of products, destruction of the means of production, food and goods, crises, sham production, waste of material and labour power, social plagues and crime, racial discrimination, occupation policy, colonial swindle, aggravation of the social question, war preparation and a thousand other evils. The extent of the symptoms, hidden or open wounds, deformations, etc., varies in the different countries (e.g. extent of slave labour in Russia); but the disease arises from the "inner essence" of the one bourgeois society which *dominates* the whole world and shapes every individual destiny with its "free" competition.

* * *

The nature and effect of free competition can best be understood by comparing it with an opiate. This comparison is particularly instructive because commodity economy, free competition, profit system, etc., are historically artificial phenomena which have nothing to do with proper production for human needs. Marx calls the transformation of the masses of the populace into *wage labourers*, into free "labouring paupers" (during "primitive accumulation"), an "artificial product of history". It is precisely this artificial origin of the capitalist mode of production which endows it with the character of artificiality in all its features. The artificiality becomes particularly conspicuous in the means by which the attempt is made to perpetuate it in the epoch of its definite decline and to "stabilise" it in other forms: introduction of fascism with an advanced slave economy in Russia; the Balkans, Italy, Germany, Japan, etc., following the Russian path; the expansion of Russian slavery, after the failure of the Axis adventure, and the efforts to stabilise it with various interim forms

(Western Germany, Japan, Korea, etc.) by the American-British-Russian alliance (see preceding paragraphs).

Thus the disease is from its inception identical with the "inner essence" of capitalist society and never leaves it. Capitalist society was born incurably ill; but once the history of its formation lies behind it (which is, next to the process of its decay, the most horrible chapter in the whole history of mankind), the opiate has a stimulating effect.

In the early stages of capitalist development the disease remains more concealed. It is there and manifests itself in the social conditions of the proletariat, the agrarian problem, the ruin and transformation of the middle classes, the colonial atrocities, the periodic crises, the national wars (for 100 years locally limited, following the stabilisation of the French Revolution at the end of the Napoleonic wars), the class struggles, the "attempts at regulation", etc. Competition deals wound upon wound to the socio-economic organism and everywhere leaves behind scars, disproportions and deformations, for which there are an equal number of corresponding ideological plaster-cures (modern philosophy included), protheses, beautification schemes, etc. Despite this, the inherent opiate produces cruelly "natural" miracles in its manner. Its stimulant action is so great that it strongly promotes the growth of the whole organism and performs achievements which not only *seem* to open up grandiose prospects for the *general* welfare, but do in fact *create* all material pre-conditions for them.

The bourgeoisie has but a single historical task in which too lies its historical right to existence. Its task is to develop the social productive forces through the medium of capitalist free competition and to establish everywhere capitalist conditions and relationships. The whole world is at its disposal for this task and despite the conflict already beginning with its birth there is place for many new rising capitalists. Bourgeois society has a certain time at its disposal to saturate its organism with the opiate of free competition, to sweep away all the rubble of the past, to revolutionise all old relationships, to develop itself with Vandal ruthlessness, to shake whole continents from their millennial slumber, to bring everything into the course of its economy, to feed itself on everything and to establish world economy, the world market and world politics.

So long as this side of its development remains preponderant, capitalism with all its vices and horrors is *indeed* the undoubted *lesser evil*. It plays an *historically progressive* rôle and moreover (great surprise for the theorists of the lesser evil!) permits no other choice. It *has* simply been *historically* victorious over the earlier forms of society and is, moreover, at the given stage of development, *historically* irreplaceable by anything else.

Contrasted with former systems, therefore, capitalism would have entered history for ever as a lesser evil, had it been liquidated as such after it had created the conditions for *general* welfare. For, according

to the "iron law of life", it transforms itself from this moment on, in face of the new prospects and its own crab crawl, into the infinitely *greater* evil. It loses one progressive feature after the other, has nothing more to offer, replaces the revolutionising of conditions by the destructions of its own achievements, inflicts ever deeper and more painful wounds, obstructs and ruins the whole body by extravagant disproportions and deformations, lives only by artificial measures and, all in all, follows that curve pointing back into overcome epochs, which we call its "retrogressive development". It thus confronts us with a decision to choose between it and the—*lesser* evil which has to consist in the abolition of commodity or profit economy with its general competition. This is far removed from a "choice" in the sense of the theorists of the lesser evil. What they propose with the "war operation" is passive surrender to the *greater* evil until (so they believe) the evil "Russian" disease is conquered. They may be compared with a quack who wants first to operate on the "Bolshevist" *symptom* of syphilis and only after that (if he is as far-sighted as this) to drive out the syphilis as such. There is "in fact" a whole school which imagines that the Devil can be driven out with Beelzebub. This supposition is based on the pervasive and extensive separation of means and ends in bourgeois society. From the alienation of means and ends results the double, treble and quadruple bourgeois morality with its refined philosophical, cultural, humanitarian and Socialist-Stalinist gruntings of which the Stalinising shallow babbler, Thomas Mann, is the universally recognised master in our epoch. Everything, however, is concrete, and we have to choose: the elimination of the syphilis from the blood circulation of society (and, therewith, from its already badly deformed Russian drain), or a painful death. The physician must actually *choose* between these two possibilities in so far as he desires to change "such" conditions. If he desires it, he will make the discovery that in his cure, at last means and ends coincide. The means *directly* penetrate the end and cannot be separated from it, the end justifies the means as inalienable pre-condition and eliminates their reappearance as an end in itself.

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Apparently deviating from the theme, we remained, in reality, strictly on the line of argument—why for "political as well as moral reasons" a crusade for the liberation of peoples has to be *opposed*, a crusade which the democracies as the profoundest cause of enslavement can neither pursue nor desire to pursue (we shall spare them empty phrases about it as well as the "practice" of the merely passive phrase-mongers). But it remains to be more clearly demonstrated that the "Bolshevist" disease is the disease that is of the "inner essence" of capitalism and that it is not even possible to retard this definite *inner* disease, as one can many others, by operations on external limbs,

much less to heal it. Let us therefore carry the given examples or comparisons a stage farther.

When the human organism is fully developed and saturated with all its possibilities, the "side of death" in contradiction to life slowly but surely gains the upper hand. The process of life continues in accordance with the same laws and yet an important change is at work. The body may in certain circumstances become fatter, broaden out, increase in growth of hair, abound in health, etc., but lungs, liver, kidneys, heart and all organs are slowly dying out, veins are hardening, the tissues grow slack, the skin becomes flabby, etc.—in short: the process of ageing has begun, continues irresistibly and gradually alters the entire inner and outer appearance. The contradiction life-death unfolds so to speak by a further contradiction: Building oneself up means using oneself up or breaking oneself down again parallel to building up. In the normal course of this process, to speak of "disease" would be nonsense. So much does it lie in the natural course of things, that a man whose organs have worn out evenly in no way fears death or regards it as a "tragedy", but welcomes it as the gently fading closing chord of the symphony of life.³

Exactly the same thing applies to human society with its economic life-process owing to which alone it is human society.⁴ Unfortunately, the task of presenting economic and social development in special as well as general respects by analogy with the human organism cannot be attempted here in all its richness. What we have to deal with at least, in order to apprehend the present situation of the capitalist system and the life and death question of war, is the inner contradiction which unmistakably manifests itself in every phase of development of an organism, and, apart from the *general* inner limit, sets each of these phases also a *special* inner limit.

It is obvious or is, at any event, easy to grasp, in the given example of the human being, that the phenomenon of life follows an inner contradiction and has an inner limit (and therewith also an outer). In the same way, everyone knows from everyday experience that people can die at any stage of their development from diseases, accidents, internal defects, special circumstances, etc., that their development can take a stunted form, or that, despite a superficially full development, sexual, intellectual and bio-chemical (internal secretions), they can nonetheless remain fixed at a stage of develop-

3. This against Erich Fromm and other psychologists who make a profound problem-drama of death. The eternal repetition of the same thing: Something secondary (here the fear of death or the "death-problem" of people who are in some way handicapped or whose uneven wearing out naturally results in shrieking dissonances) becomes fetishised and—then one lives on it.

4. Whatever else belongs to it, is to be added and plays a rôle, is to be explained not from society in the abstract but from its concrete mode of production prevailing at the given time.

ment which, with respect to the organism as a whole, is a characteristically lower one. In the same way, everyone knows how to distinguish between embryo, infant, child, youth, man and greybeard, whereby he acknowledges precisely the inner limits of these stages of development and their transition into an extended limit, whether he is aware of it or not.

Great difficulties obstruct the understanding, however, when we discuss the *inner limits* of the different social formations with their different modes of production, the development of which was brilliantly recognised and elucidated by Marx as a "process of natural history". With regard to past history, it is quite natural to speak of extinct, retarded, degenerated cultures, as well as of cultures which have remained stuck at a more or less primitive, more or less advanced stage of development and have managed in certain circumstances to remain there for millennia (comparable perhaps with a man who never reaches puberty or who loses his potency in his twentieth year and nevertheless lives to the age of ninety). It is also quite customary to make distinctions within *capitalist* culture and to refer to Italy, the Balkans, South America, etc., as "backward" countries, while America is regarded as the peak of capitalist development. Then there are specialists who occupy themselves intensively with historical and economic questions, and are very well able to indicate the inner and outer limits of pre-capitalist modes of production. Some of them even explicitly acknowledge for capitalism as well a sort of "inner law of collapse" and have discussed it in detail (based on the tendencies of capitalist development analysed by Marx, especially accumulation and the law of the tendency for the rate of profit to fall), but have been unable to follow the essence of the matter. Be it Rosa Luxemburg or Henryk Grossman, Paul M. Sweezy or Maurice Dobb—so soon as they approach the question of the specific inner limit of capitalism and the consequences for capitalist society itself and its environment, we see the theoretical errors increase and the obstacles to understanding become well-nigh insurmountable. The inner contradictions of the capitalist mode of production, which are their point of departure, find a mechanical "solution" in that they are driven to their *extreme outer limit*, where they (theoretically) suddenly cause the whole system to explode (Luxemburg, Grossman) or induce individual members to separate from the body and then to transform the entire body (Sweezy).

In this way the inner limit is simply *lost* in the *outer*, and it very soon becomes apparent that both the *extreme limit* of the inner contradiction and the *outer limit* of the organism have been *falsely* determined. For with the dissolution of the inner contradiction in the outer limit, we have literally got no further than with the "explanation" that the life of man comes to an end when he is no longer able to produce any nourishment out of himself (Grossman), has gorged himself to satiety (Luxemburg) or has compelled his extremities to make themselves independent and finally to become "master of the

situation" (Sweezy).⁵ The "explanation", thus, is as good as the opinion of the layman who "is sufficiently informed" about biological processes when he learns that one can be killed by hunger or automobile accidents (for good reasons he does not occupy himself with the complicated experiment of Sweezy in which the right hand detaches itself and becomes "an altogether marvellous fellow"). The layman turns only into its positive what appears negative to the expert (naturally, in order to become "positive" once again). Nothing seems simpler and more obvious to one who is unacquainted with economic matters (who has not the first glimmerings of consciousness about the manner in which production is actually carried on), than to carry capitalism into every country, to develop everything "efficiently" and thereby also to provide everyone with "work, bread and security". In the opinion of economic dilettantes, this alone is

5. The theoretical chapters in Dobb and Sweezy demonstrate that they are well acquainted with their subject. But they are not only first-rate experts and very intelligent, but also apologists for Stalinism. Even if one has a strong stomach, it is startling to notice how they simply ignore their knowledge and against better insights (in view of their theoretical formulations, no one will make me disavow this remark) become demagogues on the worst level of dilettantism in order to adapt themselves to the level of Master Stalin's practical-political requirements. The following is merely one example of how Sweezy seeks to throw members "separated" at the "extreme" limit into the jaws of the ruler of Russia who is quoted on all possible occasions (for Sweezy, Russia, on the basis of Master Stalin's own "theoretical" twaddle, is simply the "Socialist society"). In *Theory of Capitalist Development* (Oxford University Press, New York, second edition, p. 313, footnote), he says: "The fact that trade union activity does not much improve the conditions of the working class as a whole is one of the most important forces driving it to political action".

It cannot be denied that we also once believed that the "limit" of trade union activity described by Sweezy would make the workers politically active. We believed this not merely because it was written in the text-books, but also because reality seemed to confirm the correctness of the text-books. The experiences after the first World War showed more clearly year after year that not the slightest impulse toward "workers' politics" arose from the trade union movement and that, moreover, the workers neither found their way to their own political actions nor developed the slightest initiative in the pseudo-political organisations (C.P. and Social Democracy). In other words, it became clear that the extreme limit of the trade unions was much narrower than that indicated in the text-books and that they were unable to produce anything but trade union politics out of themselves. What still today underlies Sweezy's opinion is the conception: The ox will make his own way to his butcher when he is . . . ready for the slaughter and his meat at its juiciest and tenderest (whereby indeed the greatest usefulness of the ox would have lost itself in an outer limit alien to the ox!). To us on the other hand it became increasingly clear that the trade unions had no desire to run into the butcher's arms. They wished to live their life as trade unions to the end and did not care a damn whether their meat became in consequence tougher and tougher and useless for "revolutionary" consumption. From an absolute point of view, that its condition deteriorates with increasing age holds good for every organism; yet for all that, it keeps itself going precisely by transforming the highest limit of its development into the negative, by finding in the course of the negative development its absolute limit, and only then surrendering its corpse for other uses.

Thus, in reality, the trade union movement increasingly brought about the

the aspiration of capitalism and what it will undoubtedly achieve one day, once the backwardnesses and obstacles (primarily the dirty Stalin and company) have been one and all done away with.

But exactly this is impossible—capitalism is by nature extremely limited and simply could not exist, did it not discover alongside itself primitive societies, classless communities, slave societies, feudalism, differentiated peoples, simple and *combined* forms of the most divergent character (these again with *unevennesses* of the most diverse character), and *reinforce* these by its own peculiar mechanism, since it is itself a *combination* of all these elements. Its profoundly organic character manifests itself primarily in the fact that it devours many societies and subordinates them to its own structure. This is the first pre-condition of its origin and growth. Conversely, the same pre-condition compels it to affect other societies only partially or to leave them completely untouched.⁶ This takes place in a milieu where everything, individual or general, in pure or in combined form, has developed *unevenly*. The unevennesses and combinations which are encountered are then in part developed, in part levelled, intensified,

direct *deterioration* of the situation of the working class "as a whole" and even their enslavement. The "pensions policy", pioneered by the German Social Democrats and now being pursued so "energetically" in America by John L. Lewis and Walter Reuther, shackles the workers so firmly to capitalism and makes the trade unions so dependent that it can be said without exaggeration: The trade union ox is stone dead and has provided nothing apart from tough leather from which Father State cuts whips for the entire population. That Sweezy refuses to realise this in regard to Russia and the peoples enslaved by Stalin is to be explained by the requirements of his demagogy. But a man like him displays even worse demagogy when he, who is able to express excellent things about "fetishism", still to this day pretends to believe *quite generally*: "When it is discovered that capitalism here too [in trade union policy—E.Z.] sets definite limits to the gains obtainable, the working class will in the long run be compelled by experience to change their aims from reform within the framework of capitalism to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist economy".

Clearly, what is involved here is a *definite* limit which is supposed automatically to push forward to another aim. To this, merely the following dry answer is required: Our brave trade union ox "discovers" nothing of itself. If, however, it has arrived at the definite limit of its *fattening capacity*, it is satisfied with its *definite* or absolute limit, goes the way of all flesh in the usual manner and dies just as it has lived: loving the straw of the master on whose condition depends the amount of food it receives and when the last blow on the neck comes. The trade unions have become the most effective instrument for the enslavement of the workers—an anachronism to the advantage of reaction. Only blind men or apologists can overlook the horrible tortures of the victims when the Father of all peoples crunches "separated limbs" between his jaws.

6. There are also areas which capitalism "disturbs" not for economic but for political (imperialist) reasons. In this respect, too, it resembles the individual men who utilise animals, and often keep them at great expense, in order to capture other animals with them. The pleasure of hunting thereupon easily becomes an end in itself: gratification of pure lust for power and murder—*Part pour Part*.

conserved, varied, combined, modified, systematised and (all in all) reproduced:

Above all, capitalism must uninterruptedly reproduce its own development through the *use value*, which persists in capitalism even as *pure use value*, and even in its most extreme commodity form, through its destructive daemonism alienated from the end, suggests memories of a "lost paradise".⁷ As much as the *capitalistically* produced use values make themselves independent as commodities and, *capitalistically* used up, totally fail of their original purpose, lose every vestige of "usefulness", and may even become directly harmful and destructive (the utter extreme is the hydrogen bomb) . . . as much must they derive their tyrannical daemonism from some requirement of some people, i.e. they must have passed *through and been formed by use value* in a concrete and useful determination.⁸

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From this point onward the "problem of limits" leads into more general spheres.

Even as human life in general does not cease on the death of an individual at whatever age, so society as such does not die on the fall of an individual social formation with its definite mode of produc-

7. In the beginning, use value is only a "useful thing" and nothing more, thus not yet a *commodity* which can be accumulated. It is the memory—preserved in the *use value* of the commodity and obscured only by the commodity character of the use values, though constantly dragged along with it—of an unproblematic relationship to the objects of human need which, so to speak psychologically, keeps alive the "yearning" for a return to a "lost paradise" and stirs it up the more, the more clearly the memory announces itself in the immense collection of commodities of our time. The "split" in consciousness with which the psychologists rightly concern themselves and which they "only" do not know how to grasp, originates in the splitting of "useful things" into use values and commodities, which become completely alienated from one another and drive human beings to "madness" because the immense collection of commodities evades every reasonable use. The disorder in consciousness in our society can in no way be overcome other than by the restoration of *pure use value*.

8. It is of no importance whether the requirement is of a material or spiritual nature, whether it originates in phantasy or fantastic notions, whether it is based on delusion or pure imagination, or exists only as a perverse lust in the heads of power-obsessed statesmen and military men. Commodities are adventurous and drive to adventure. The consumption of opium is harmful; but if the opium trade brings big profits, England wages war for it and imposes the poison on the Chinese people by force. The many kinds of mouth-wash, nose-drops, cold cures and similar "products" are (when not dangerous) ineffective; but ignorant imagination provides for the sale of the rubbish year after year in huge quantities at fantastic prices. It is a delusion of women that they can make themselves more "attractive" with "jewellery" and cosmetic preparations (to say nothing of the "men"!); but imagination is an insatiable customer. (Incidentally, where there is nothing, the paint pot has also lost its rights and maintains itself as an end in itself. "Beauty preparations" have often so spoiled the skin that they have become established as independent powers. Thicker layers of powder have

tion at whatever stage of its individual existence. Again, earlier forms of life are not one and all destroyed by the *human* form of life which has grown out of them, but continue to exist *side by side with* and *in it*, and *definite* forms are preserved in the human embryo, even after the complete dissolution of their independent organic existence, in some essential characteristics, biological functions, etc. In the same way, earlier social forms and modes of production continue to exist *side by side with* and *in* bourgeois society with its capitalist mode of production; they would have to be preserved "embryonically" in the profit system, even were it the fate of the latter to exterminate artificially and arbitrarily all non-human forms of life and all non-capitalist modes of production. But there can be no question of that without the aid of the hydrogen bomb which would then put an artificial end to *everything*. Outside of artificial measures of that calibre, the laws of the limit are valid.

The following is true, quite generally: So long as the more highly developed forms of life and society exist at all, no single essential feature and essential constituent part of the earlier development can be lost. Man and capitalist society are, in the aspect of *arbitrariness* as well, the most destructive organisms on earth; but even their arbitrariness has a definite limit, to pass beyond which would mean absolute self-destruction of their own species. Man *dominates* the animal in himself and in external nature, but is never able to rid himself of it "internally" (in the evolutionary sense) and is forced to tolerate its independent existence outside of his own organism as well, if he does not wish to rid himself of all basis for existence. The same is true of capitalism which, as much in single capitalist countries as in relation to all the economic forms existing outside these countries, is only the *dominating* form. Within its own system it has to drag about with it all former modes of production and is unable to rid itself of them; outside the capitalist countries there are a number of other systems which are an organic pre-condition as well as a permanent basis of existence for capitalism.

It is, moreover, characteristic of all higher development that the immediately transitional forms always disappear in it; only embryonic

constantly to be applied in order to conceal the failed of end and the resultant damage.) Chamberpots and cuckstools for infants are useful things; but produced in capitalist conditions, it is possible for them to rot unused in spite of need for them, throw workers out of employment and ruin capitalists. Onions are not looked at in the shape of useful things lest they should, even unpeeled, bring tears to our eyes: "Farmer Sam Kennedy has spread 30 cart loads of onions on his fields as manure because present prices are too low for him." (A.P., 3rd April, 1950.) Games of chance, advertisements, "spiritual" values—capitalism also produces artificial "needs" *en masse* and sometimes unleashes a crisis with commodities for which, speculation notwithstanding, no artificial demand could be *provoked*. Capitalist sport as a "need" is a further artificial mass chapter. Who has ever watched certain American sporting events on the films or the butchery of a boxing match and not shuddered with nausea at fighters and spectators . . . (*eh bien*, such things have to be stomachached).

vestiges (rudiments) and less strongly marked forms remain. There still exist slave societies and feudal structures; but classical antiquity and the European feudal empires have gone for ever. There still exist communist communities with pure use value; but commodity society evolves from these as little as human beings from still existing apes. This only confirms that, on the one hand, it is possible for every organism to remain static at every possible stage of its development and, on the other hand, that the organisms are mutually dependent for their conservation. It happens with organisms (as with individual peoples) that they ruin their environment and then are punished for the violation of their outer limit with their own doom. But this always involves merely single aspects of development, not the whole process.

It is also true that social development corresponds to that of the human organism;⁹ but as has already been indicated above, only one social formation (the capitalist) has as yet *approached* the maturity of society as a whole.

The principal difference between individual human and collective social development is that collective development takes place in gigantic dimensions and individual development in short spaces of time. In consequence of this difference, social development has not yet emerged from its youth *before* the transition into full maturity; but if it overcomes the specific difficulties of this stage and is not completely ruined, its future can, like that of the individual, be anticipated in a general sense. Thus it can be said with certainty: Only one single society (that which, on a higher basis, again produces for *use*) will enjoy the fruits of the previous development. It will attune itself to its original layout, harmonise itself and nature, bring individual national peculiarities to their finest flowering and simultaneously remove the disproportions originating in mere poverty, i.e. conserve, vary, combine, modify, reproduce, etc., on a basis of wealth and not of need. Given the enormous dimensions of the stage of social development, it will long enjoy the full possession of its strength (even as the vigour of manhood embraces the longest period of life in the healthy individual), until it slowly ages with the earth and eventually perishes.

Faced with this perspective, our entire interest must concentrate on those contradictions which dominate social development in its "period of puberty" (its *capitalist* stage of development). It requires no effort to understand that puberty cannot be a "final stage" and must, in consequence of the special inner limit which, side by side with the general limit, is inherent in every phase of development, turn in the one direction or the other. All phases of development have their own rhythm with ascent, peak and decline. With continuous development, the decline is a *transition* into the next stage, which, however, is clearly stamped as *decline* where the further development is retarded

9. Pattern until capitalism: communist communities—embryo; differentiation until slave society—infancy to boyhood; feudalism—boyhood to youth; capitalism—youth to manhood.

for a long period or blocked for ever. The transitions, for their part, are always critical stages in which not only have the organic difficulties of transformation to be overcome, but also where the organism, as a result of an exceptional sensitiveness, is also exceptionally vulnerable and susceptible to external influences.

The most turbulent stage of development is undoubtedly the period of puberty, in which is decided whether the embryonic endowment can achieve full development and be combined with the previous stages of development into a higher result, or not. The earliest memories, the strongest desires, the most powerful impulses, the boldest hopes, the greatest illusions and deepest depressions overwhelm the organism in puberty, which is supplied with "undreamt of strength" by the new secretion of the sexual organs and, with the maturation of these organs, wants itself to become mature and find the manly balance of all former chapters of life.

Once it is released from the protecting womb, nothing shakes and alters the organism so profoundly as the period of puberty and the less it is possible for the shock to settle, the more does it lead, in the antagonism of the newly released forces, from one shock and depression to another. Thus, the more there is failure to achieve balance, or the more it is retarded, the greater are the internal and external incentives for the impulses, desires, etc., obstructed in their free unfolding, to clash chaotically and paralyse one another. This necessarily leads to over-accentuation of individual impulses which thereby harden, become independent, perverted, cramped and, in certain circumstances, may compel the organism not only to be satisfied with a one-sided inharmonious development, but also to break off the development, to turn it into its negative, to become crippled and, with all the features of the crippling, to fall back to the functions of earlier stages.

This crippling can assume frightful forms and is basically different from that natural "process of shrinkage" in the fully developed person (whose sexuality and mental flexibility for example, gradually go to sleep, whose body gradually dries out and whose intellectual behaviour and functions again become those of a "child"). If the process of shrinkage is unproblematic and unequivocal, so by the same token is the process of interrupted development problematic and ambiguous, i.e. in it every perversion and mutilation is possible, from mental and sexual impotence to raving insanity and lasciviousness, from deformations and diseases of single organs or limbs to the loss of all limbs and the deformation of all organs, simultaneity and manifold combinations of these degenerations included.

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It is now self-evident from the gigantic dimensions of social development that its organic and external difficulties (especially with regard to the transitions from one formation into the other) must also attain colossal proportions. If we consider the human organism, it is

clear that, after the innumerable attempts and endless repetitions which Nature made with this organism, the abnormalities, atavisms, stagnations, deformities, reversals of development, etc., have been basically overcome. These can no longer exercise any influence over the development of the human *race* and are the exceptions, not the rule, although they may appear to be extensive (for example, in consequence of the degeneration of capitalist *society* which creates an unhallowed number of physical and mental semi-finished products and utilises them as semi-finished products or mere raw material).¹⁰

In contrast, however, social development as a whole is a unique and protracted process in which the transitions invariably assume a markedly violent, convulsive, critical character and each time create something previously unknown. Each transition has the effect of an independent act of birth, and ascent, peak and decline of the separate decisive formations in the total development (succession and change-over of the different stages) stand out far more sharply and independently than in the case of the individual. If it can on the one hand be said that society has in general done with the difficulties and crises of the transition from embryo to youth, there can, on the other, be no question yet of a *fundamental* overcoming of the organic crises and of a *solution* of the problem of social development. Up to the present what has been confirmed in all respects is the fact that in the sphere of social development as in all, the period of puberty is the one which most lastingly convulses the organism, revolutionises it from top to bottom and changes it in the most decisive manner.

The analogy between the human and social organism is complete up to this point. What is the act of birth and what are the pleasures and conflicts of infancy, childhood and youth in man compared with the strange self-consciousness and the crises and heights and depths he experiences in himself during puberty? These are relatively few and only have meaning as the transition to the higher form. Until then, man does not bother about his embryonic endowment nor can he bother about it for he has, at most, attained a dark presentiment of, but not yet any materially and organically founded self-consciousness about, this endowment. His aspirations, his activity and his interests are necessarily limited and indeed extend with his growth; but range of vision, universal interests and sexual potency for the reproduction of life are still absent.

10. It is of value to draw attention to the following: On the average, only average results are achieved. It is only at great turning points of history that geniuses appear with momentous achievements which pioneer the new development. Their achievements, however, are rapidly generalised (in fact, they can, in principle, be imitated by every good average) and vulgarised. As soon as the storm is over and the waves calm, the braggart under-average mediocrity becomes the norm which concentrates, for example, on American automobiles, Brahms and Thomas Mann. Individual development will only achieve a much higher and better-balanced average when society has its puberty behind it.

By analogy: What are the disorders, fights, convulsions, conquests, advances and achievements of human society from the dissolution of the primitive community to classical feudalism? With all their significance as necessary transitional stages, these are local events in comparison with the truly universal turnabouts, advances, conquests, crises and catastrophes which characterise the capitalist period of puberty in social development from the end of the Middle Ages up to the present day. The partial break-throughs into higher stages of development could exercise only slight, in no way decisive, influence upon the total development of mankind. Even less could the attempts of ancient societies to shape the then known world in their own image or to make uniform use of the result till then attained, have permanence.

What has been achieved by pre-capitalist social formations in the way of destruction, construction, remoulding of the nearer or more distant environment, etc., remains "child's play" in contrast to the global influence of capitalism. Capitalism has literally uprooted the whole past of social evolution: it has of itself experienced every impulse, passion, memory, dream, nostalgia, possibility and has unleashed in itself forces of infinitely greater potency than those of all former developmental stages taken together (as much the formations which directly were absorbed by it as those which at some stage or another perished, became petrified, were conserved, degenerated or were retarded). In a word, it disposes of far more forces and resources than would be necessary to accomplish the break-through into maturity, to render its original tendencies fertile for social reproduction, and to unify social evolution in its totality in an unprecedented Golden Age. In addition, the urge towards unification and harmonious balance of all previous stages of development in a higher result is equally present and has found a more or less promising, more or less illusory expression in the magnificent projects, scientific systems and political endeavours from the Utopians to Marx and the working class movement.¹¹ And yet, with all this wealth of means, forces, resources and scientific and technical equipment, one still cannot foresee whether the last decisive break-through will succeed or not.

With regard to the uniqueness of the processes of social development as a whole, the positive or negative resolution of this question has far- and deep-reaching influence not only on the capitalist form of society, but also on all previous forms which are, on the one hand, its organic foundation and which it carries about with it, and which, on the other hand, it affects and uses up for economic and political reasons and which, for the same reasons, it leaves untouched, depresses

11. The already hopelessly illusory attempts with the League of Nations of blessed memory and the United Nations should also be mentioned. Objectively these are bourgeois deceit and still-born monsters from the inception, since they sum up the *capitalist* result, thus seek to organise "puberty" and to make it the crown of evolution. Unfortunately, the stabilisation of puberty is of all illusions the greatest.

and conserves. In other words, because capitalism is already a *dominating* and universally determining form, but has in no way secured control over its past (as the mature man has) and has achieved universality even less harmoniously, the question here is one of life and death for mankind. The whole plant must die if the ear of corn withers before it has renewed and reproduced it many fold—no one is in a position to estimate where and how development could once more make a break-through, if it is definitively blocked by decay in its capitalist stage, experiences a crippled devolution and holds down *all* development in this inversion.

Thus the question of the *definite* decay of *capitalist* society narrows down to the question whether thereby the decay of social evolution in the wider sense is *definite*. Although the continuous transition to the higher level has already been blocked for a long time and has consequently experienced a sharp negative turn, this turn nonetheless gives no evidence about the definite fate of the process of development in its totality. The danger for humanity is great, the menace of the situation can scarcely be exaggerated; but the *general* limit of the organism is not yet involved—only the *special* limit of its *capitalist* phase of development.

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Here it should be recalled that essential features and essential constituents of the previous development cannot become lost, so long as the more highly developed forms of life and society exist at all. To give an example of how this law unquestionably holds good for capitalism as the hitherto highest economic form: Even in the most markedly capitalist countries, a certain percentage of human needs is met by pre-capitalist production. Under this head fall smallholders', artisan-, hobby-production (also allotments and the breeding of poultry, pigs, goats, sheep and so on by workers who, moreover, are not infrequently their own cobblers, house-painters or tailors and make their entire household furniture in their spare time, even building houses) and so on. Part of this is produced for their own use and does not become a commodity at all as in "ancient times", another part finds its way into capitalist commodity circulation in spite of its "alien" origin. Together with these remnants of pre-capitalist production, there are also necessarily preserved within capitalism the corresponding political remnants of primitive communism (e.g. communal ownership of woodlands and meadows), slavery and feudalism, on which the constitutions of States and municipalities, together with law books and even the statutes of certain societies, artisan guilds and trade unions give detailed information.

Should development now in some way reach a stalemate, then the organism in question will first of all strive to remain in stagnation. Stagnation, however, is in contradiction to development and is, in practice, the attempt to make further development possible again by means of a *temporary* (tactical) step back. Since the organism must

constantly be fed, even normal feeding during stagnation has in the nature of the case the same effect as over- or under-feeding. Under-nourishment causes shrinkage, over-feeding, swelling—both at the given stage of development (thus outside the general course of development) are deformity and always have the effect of a return to earlier stages of development which are strengthened and reinforced in this way.

In this way, at critical points in development, stages already passed by acquire enhanced significance: They serve the organism as natural support for a new start and (where this start fails) give the definite lawful stamp to the further retrogression. With regard to such a retrogression, the law that "no feature can become lost" proves itself also in the negative direction: Deformities, contractions, paralyse of the most terrible kinds are possible; but so long as the organism exists at all, no essential element of the higher developmental stage, once this has been entered, can become lost either. On the contrary, only for this reason can one speak of progressive or retrogressive development, since in the first process the earlier, in the second the later, stages are *preserved* and exercise a decisive influence on the form of the process (on its lawful course). What the individual stages lose in the corresponding processes is only their independent form, whereas their essential content enters into them as *decisive*, no matter what direction they may take at a given point.¹²

With regard to the negative direction of the process of development we speak of decomposition, decay or putrefaction; but since these expressions create the impression of irregularity and do not seize the essentials of development, we have to say more precisely: Decay is *to a certain extent* devolution. This is the organic law from which our "retrogressive movement" of capitalism gets its special form and also its inner logic, and by which feudalism and slavery necessarily gain again in extent and significance. Nothing else remains to capitalism but to follow the general rule: It seeks support for its self-preservation and falls back upon stages already undergone. Important in this connection is the insight that the retrogressive development has a *lower* limit beyond which it cannot pass and which brings it about that the stage of development lying immediately above it,

12. Were it otherwise, there would be no question of a continuous process of development; but every section of the development would be a definitely *independent* structure, each time a "new creation". Infant, child, youth, etc., would have to remain what they are, created by a miracle out of nothing; they would not be able to die a natural death and would have to be removed from the world by disease, a car accident, or by "bursting" from over-eating. In the social field, it would mean that backward primitive people and so on would likewise have to remain what they were, thus that they, too, would be incapable of being assimilated. As primitive and superstitious as these notions are (and, in practice, refuted by savages who, in the shortest time, make perfect "civilians") they are nevertheless the notions of official "science" which denies the possibility of a scientific sociology and believes in the eternity of capitalism instead.

furnishes the clearly recognisable basis for the process of devolution. This lower limit is the entirely sexually determined embryonic state, the conditions of which are in every concrete case destroyed once and for all, and re-adaptation to which is therefore impossible.

The lower limit is a sort of punishment for failure to achieve the peak point of the development, the tendency of which has only the one goal, to re-establish the embryonic state on a new and higher basis and to secure the organism (in the framework of the natural conditions and restrictions prevailing at any given time) from dying out. At the same time the lower limit draws attention to the available reserves and just for that reason raises into prominence the stage of development above it as the basis for retreat in order to give the threatened organism an opportunity to gather fresh forces. On superficial consideration, it might seem that for decaying capitalism feudalism would first of all be the given form to which it might withdraw in self-defence. This, however, is merely the appearance—although all features of the past are intensified and revived, their own weight immediately pulls the development down even further. It is for this reason that nothing distinguishes present-day capitalism more than the vehemence with which it seeks refuge in the barbaric forms of slavery (the infancy to childhood of social evolution). In these forms it hopes to find peace and security for itself and new strength for self-preservation. It is scarcely necessary to draw attention again to the fact that it is utopian to seek to curb the forces unchained with a view to the future by turning backward—either the natural development will be resumed and completed after a temporary setback, or else society will perish from the complications of its puberty.

Thus capitalism will never achieve its aim of maintaining itself through reaction as an "eternal" social formation—rather will it have to commit suicide and artificially explode the whole of society.¹³ In examining the retrogressive movement, therefore, there is no question of fixing a "final result" but only of the concrete working out of the inherent developmental contradiction which dictates: An organism which is unable to complete its course of life in a natural way and reach its *general* (or absolute) limit, must degenerate *below*

13. It is characteristic that the idea of the suicide of *society* is being toyed with already in our time. Scientists, politicians, psychologists and "philosophers" (take our "great" Bertrand Russell) [who has since then "changed his mind" without, however, becoming less silly in his political behaviour.—A.M.] write the destruction of mankind in atomic war, from the most sublime points of view, as a "plus" in the democratic account, and console themselves with the fact that "something" of humanity would remain after all (in one case, an African pygmy tribe was considered as the possible survivor). The authentic psychology of capitalism in degeneration manifests itself clearly in the obvious lunacy of these apologists. After deducting the apologetic and ideological trimmings, of which not a single letter is to be taken seriously, only the cynical bourgeois remains whose motto at one time was: After us the deluge! Harder pressed he says today: If it must be, let it be—*With* is the deluge!

the *special* limit of whatever specific phase of development it was unable to transform into its natural successor (and perhaps die prematurely).

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To avoid misconception, some further remarks:

First, it would be incorrect in examining organic developmental processes to search for an *absolute* peak of development. When it is said that all life-phases of an organism have their own rhythm with ascent, peak and decline (in which connection decline becomes anomalous only when at some point it comes into contradiction with the whole process and establishes itself outside the natural order as an independent quality), the peak has always to be regarded relatively, i.e. to be established by comparison. In the case of capitalism it can be very clearly seen that its balance sheet has uninterruptedly worsened since the first World War (which accordingly should be considered as the peak of capitalism). The following is given as a resumé of what has already been said about this here and elsewhere: In the last 35 years, the level of capitalist achievement has dropped by more than 50 per cent and must in the long run drop further, should the capitalist mode of production not (as will be shown also with regard to the mechanism of competition) be abolished altogether.

Second, the process as a whole must always be borne in mind and capitalist decline measured by the result attained on a world scale. The political symptoms of decline (for example, the decline of bourgeois democracy) are a sure guide in the investigation and can be treated as "pure economic" facts, where "accurate" statistics, which nowadays are moreover suitably cooked and have become highly questionable, are still lacking. From this point of view it does not matter in the slightest what Stalin's Politbureau says officially, or his hacks, Dobb and Sweezy, "theoretically", about the "social being" of Russia—the permanently extended slavery, the political terror, the social differences, the disgustingly base propaganda level, the demagogic impudence, the imperialist oppression and plundering of foreign nations and national minorities, the moral and intellectual depravity and, last but not least, the pseudo-theoretical effusions of the copyists of Stalin, Sweezy himself, are the certain proof of what Russia is. It is no different with America, where the fantastic bureaucratisation and militarisation, the Morgenthau Plan, the arbitrary treatment of Japan with atom bombs (one must study the documents published), the curtailment of democracy and the persecution of the "homosexuals" (this alone, of itself, speaks volumes) would already tell us "everything" about the real state of capitalism—even if there were a sore lack of other symptoms and "hard economic facts" (which is, however, by no means the case).

Third, there must be a warning against "production fetishism" to which not only the apologists of capitalism and the friends of the allegedly "new" Russia, but also certain "Marxists", are loyal to

the death, having once read something about the progressive development of the social productive forces. There is no doubt that production is the life process of human society (metabolism, blood circulation, etc.) but exactly for this reason, it decides also about the manner in which decomposition and renewal occur, i.e. about good or faulty digestion, health or sickness, even or distorted growth, one-sided or all-sided development, harmonious or uneven wear and tear, death through external influences (diseases, of which the culture medium is, in the final instance, always the organism itself weakened by incorrect nourishment or faulty digestion through lack of movement) or in accordance with the law of its own life-cycle. The mere capacity of an organism for acquiring nourishment and even for devouring larger quantities of it, still provides no evidence at all about the digestive processes and the quality which the development takes on therewith. Whether capitalism be considered as the final product or as only a stage of social development is a matter of indifference in this connection: The criterion for the *progressive* development of the productive forces is concrete and determined by the advancement of society as a whole. Whatever the crimes, vices, defects and evils for which one can blame capitalism, it nonetheless, with all the hardships and difficulties in the great zig-zag line to the first World War (and only the great line can teach us anything about the essence of the movement), made infinitely more out of humanity than it was at any time before. Nevertheless, one can see with the naked eye that the curve has dropped steeply since that time, and that, in spite of the *in truth enormously increased productive forces*, which have led not to the further expansion of capitalism as a world system (in the development at least of the highly capitalist countries) and to the cultural and political ascent of mankind, or, at least, of the proletariat;¹⁴ but to a retreat in many spheres, to the shattering of world economy, to the loss of the dynamic equilibrium and to the definitive breakdown of the international working class movement. It permits of the apparently paradoxical formulation: The higher the abstract productive forces develop on a capitalist basis and the more the commodities they spew forth, the less is their value for a rational society and the deeper the descent of humanity into barbarism.¹⁵

14. The Marxists mentioned, who otherwise have no illusions about capitalism, succumb to the fetish of the abstract "centralised and concentrated productive forces" on the grounds that these will weld together the proletariat, educate it, give it international solidarity and drive "class consciousness" into it. They choose not to perceive that, under certain circumstances, a quality can change into a mere quantity and that they merely worship the backside of accumulation.

15. A single glance at the economic and political state of the world is enough to perceive the economic chaos and the "progressive" tendency of fascism *growing out of democracy itself*. The Western democracies do not even deny crises and increasing barbarism and only claim that these are due to the wars forced upon them, to Hitler and Stalin, but cannot be blamed on well-meaning capitalism "as such". A fine statement: The thunderstorm made

Why this is so will be explained in greater detail below—at this point it is only a question of asserting: The sole capitalist achievement of decisive importance is not the capacity for continuous expansion of the *volume* of production (under the influence of competition, this has the same clogging effect as the "progressive" accumulation of fat in a man who, on top of all other infirmities, has in the meantime also had his arms and legs amputated), but the *technical* level reached thereby. This technical level is necessarily far below what would be possible; but is preserved in accordance with the law that features cannot be lost. The potentialities of this technical level are such that it would allow of the realisation of the most daring dreams of mankind, i.e. literally become capable of fertilization and of begetting a whole series of societies which, as independent communities with the greatest wealth of forms, would mutually maintain one another in harmonious equilibrium. More concretely said, technique has to be liberated from the fetters of profit and competition in order to be able to transform the society determined by the requirements of *capital* into societies which are all-sidedly developed, i.e. determined by *human* requirements and therefore simply *humanly* determined. Under the domination of competition, however, a continuous abortion occurs and, to the misfortune of the production fetishists of all tendencies, the positive side of the potentialities becomes ever more latent. Latent potentiality inevitably becomes perversion, for under the stimulus of competition, it cannot rest or shake off the itch for profit. There can be no picture drastic enough to illustrate the resulting condition of society. A wild lust for self-gratification with continuous depression, progressive weakening, paralysis and self-poisoning—this is all that still remains as a result of the "progressively developed productive forces", so long as they are dominated and held down by commodity economy. Much more important, therefore, than all existing means of production and products is the level of technique which permits the production of further means of production (above all, new types of machinery) and with the aid of these, the positive revolutionizing of the whole of production serving capitalist self-gratification, together with trade, use of raw materials, town planning, power supply, nutrition, human upbringing, the replacement of the calamitous *forced* division of labour by a voluntary one, and the overcoming of false production as well as of harmful production and of the extravagant waste. In the present state of affairs, these categories together with the

us very wet and caused a flood; but had nothing to do with the prevailing meteorological conditions. This statement is well-suited to those who "trained" Stalin in the Morgenthau Plan, Yalta, unconditional surrender and the five days' war against a Japan already willing to capitulate instead of holding, if needs be under the nose of the "Tsar of all the Russias", the atomic bomb which was "tried out" on somebody defenceless. But for God's sake, this would have meant freedom for all!—how can one suggest such an "unrealistic" policy.

corresponding State-, administrative-, advertising- and distributive-apparatus and so on take up more than 60% of social energy, are thus purely oppressive and self-poisoning factors. Technical potency automatically drives toward decentralisation, whereas the capitalist mode of production poisons everything thoroughly and has even polluted the atmosphere with smoke, gases, the petrol stench of agglomerated factories and towns to such an extent, as to be still measurable at the remotest points of the oceans.

Fourth, consideration of all processes of development brings into prominence that quality which dominates over the organism at every given stage of development and gives it a specific direction. As against this quality, all other moments or qualities can be treated as secondary, or completely neglected, however much they may, on the other hand, be responsible for some or any details and variations. In ordinary life, every discerning person submits to the powerful verdict of the dominating quality, and will assert summarily without reference to any other circumstances: This man is old; that one is intelligent; a third will be completely characterised by the remark that he suffers from consumption, or is an ill-mannered adolescent, or has no character, and so on. Such evaluations show that the dominant quality has in every case to be concretely defined, and this, in the case of complex phenomena, requires accurate knowledge.

For so complex a phenomenon as capitalism there have, however, despite everything, been established two characteristics which are admitted to be its essence and whose disappearance could mean the end of this economic system. Whatever other differences there are—about the fundamental significance of *profit* and *competition*, opponents and supporters of capitalism are at one and rightly see in them the pivotal points of the whole system. Since, moreover, profit itself, as well as its growth (accumulation), its rate, its distribution, etc., is regulated by the mechanism of competition, it is in terms of profit and competition alone that the world historical success of capitalism (the strong argument of its defenders) on the one hand, and its unavoidable doom (the far stronger argument of its opponents) on the other, can be explained. It has yet to be noted that development indeed never follows a straight line; yet, despite numerous zig-zags, détours, diversions, pauses for recovery, counter-currents and so on, always finds its way back into that direction introduced by the dominant quality.

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Against this background, the inherent contradiction of competition and profit can now be sketched: First, how it acts "in itself", and secondly, how it became entangled with the puberty phase of society and had to shape this special phase not as a natural transition to manhood, but as an abrupt decline. For the contradiction "in itself", only the "ideal" representation will be considered, which exhausts itself in one feature and remains the same under all suppositions.

That is to say: Whether one supposes that there be two or two million competing capitalists, two or twenty rival capitalist countries, is of no consequence at all in the ultimate effect produced by general competition and profit economy.

If, for example, there were only one single capitalist country, and if in this country there were, apart from two capitalists, only wage labourers, then the capitalist system would come to an end with the elimination of capitalist A by capitalist B (or vice versa) and would dissolve itself into its opposite, i.e. out of itself, it would have brought forth a new quality, which could be defined only as a condition of *competitionlessness*. The same effect comes about when many competitors and many countries have successively to be eliminated by competition, quite irrespective of whether the final victor in the struggle be a single capitalist, a group of united capitalists (e.g. an international trust) or the "state-capitalism" of the mightiest country (let us say America). In each case, competition would have been transformed by its own mechanism into a *monopoly*, which puts an end to competition and therewith brings to an end the capitalist mode of production. The essence or the inner contradiction of capitalist profit economy (the whole course of which is regulated by competition) consists thus in this, the liquidation of competition by the process of competition—exactly as life, by the processes of life, passes into death, or puberty through itself arrives at its conclusion.

With the self-liquidation of competition we would, by reason of this alone, already have arrived at the liquidation of capitalist society, since with competition profit also disappears and leaves nothing remaining of capitalism as an economic system, other than the attained volume of production and the corresponding technical skeleton. Competition indeed stimulates and regulates profit; but profit also stimulates and regulates competition. The end of competition is the end of profit, because *capitalist* profit, in contradistinction to all other forms of appropriation of the social surplus-product (e.g. of slavery, feudalism or merchantilist profit), is a form of appropriation which originates solely in the competition between capitalists *and* labourers, and presupposes a mass of propertyless but formally "free" labourers. As soon as capitalist profit disappears, capitalist accumulation also ceases, which is the real "soul" of the capitalist system and which, driven by competition, first fully developed the social productive apparatus and therewith ushered society into the phase of puberty.

We shall gain full clarity about this phase of puberty of society and its meaning for society's well-being only if we keep in mind that the productive apparatus and the sexual apparatus are identical and that the organism can assume a fully developed shape only when the general growth of the organism (determined by the prevailing mode of procuring food) goes hand in hand with the specific growth of the sexual organs. If life is chemical self-renewal and decomposition, it is at the same time production in the widest sense. To begin with, the organism can use the nutriment offered by nature in the *offered*

form as little as a man could make soup in a large lump of iron found by the wayside. Each organism must therefore change the form of the nutriment to make it suitable for itself. This process of transformation can *begin* either before or after the taking in of food, and for this purpose various organisms dispose of tools, special organs, chemical substances, etc., to which man (better: human society, for no single man, but only a co-ordination of *all* forces, could bring this about) adds a multiplicity of tools (technology in its totality), with the aid of which he not only provides himself with food, clothing, shelter, and so on, but also leads society out of its infancy towards maturity.

What mainly matters in our present investigation is the insight: Every transformation of any matter whatsoever and for any purpose whatsoever is in and for itself already production.¹⁶ It is production in a threefold fashion: first, for mere self-preservation (renewal of consumption); secondly, for building up or growth (including the sexual organs which, though "inborn", yet in the first phase of development merely "participate" (in this growth) and have still no function of their own; thirdly, special production for reproduc-

16. In *Capital* (Volume I, Chapter I, Section 2), Marx makes the profound observation: "[Man] can work only as Nature does, that is by *changing the form of matter*. Nay more, in this work of changing the form he is constantly helped by natural forces. We see, then, that labour is *not the only source of material wealth, of use-values produced by labour*. As William Petty puts it, labour is its father and the earth its mother." In a footnote to this Marx then quotes the following argument of Pietro Verri's: "All the phenomena of the universe, whether produced by the hand of man or by the universal laws of physics, give us the notion not of *actual creation*, but only of a *transformation* of matter. *To join together and to separate* are the sole elements which human genius discovers upon analysis of the idea of reproduction; and so with the reproduction of value [value in use, although Verri in this passage of his controversy with the Physiocrats is not himself quite certain of the kind of value he is speaking of—Marx] and of wealth, whether earth, air and water in the fields transform themselves into grain [for the sake of clarity, it is better to include also *the already produced grain*, which is transformed with the help of earth, air and water, etc., and then reproduced in greater quantities—E.Z.], or whether the gluten of some insect be transformed by the hand of man into velvet, or some little bits of metal organize themselves into the form of a repeater." That spiritual production also is only the transformation of thought material (analysis or taking to pieces and rearranging or synthesis) is self-evident. Wilhelm Busch: "The poet? Good Heavens, what shall he do? All ideas have been in use since the world began!" It is the same with respect to production, in that all things and processes are infinitely *identical* and infinitely *different*, and that *productivity* must flatly be claimed as the *fourth attribute* of matter (the other three being movement or energy, sensitivity and striving for balance). The labour of matter upon itself constitutes the generative power of Nature (*generatio equivoca*—a new blow to all teleology). The sexual instinct is thus anchored in all transformations of matter (William Petty's fine statement, that the earth is the mother and labour the father of all material wealth) and actual sexual production is nothing but reproduction with the help of a special productive apparatus resulting from the division of labour, which besides makes possible expanded reproduction and the improvement of quality.

tion (either expansion followed by division, or production of sperms, eggs, milk, etc., all products which are "secreted"). However much this production forms a single whole and cannot be broken up, there is yet a difference insofar as production for the growth or full formation of the organism and, later, production for reproduction, cease completely at a certain point, leaving only production for self-preservation (by the way at a reduced rate in the case of ageing organisms). Peculiar and of the greatest importance is the circumstance that an organism completes its growth only when production for reproduction has already taken place and has acted back upon the organism. All higher organisms at least, reach sexual maturity before they have finished to grow (and periodically put forth flowers, fruit, etc. which periodically fall off or are eliminated, whether proper reproduction take place or not); but it is just by the forces unleashed by sexual maturity that they are now developed to their full compass and brought to their inner limit. Not the sexually mature youth, but only the adult man is organically "fully grown", and this full growth on its part is the precondition for the preservation of the powers of procreation. We have here the same result as before: If the development is interrupted at some point, the organism atrophies, becomes deformed and perishes without realising its organic possibilities.

What takes place in society could be called "self-fertilization"; multiplication takes place by the division (decentralization) of the productive apparatus, by means of which communities with productive apparatuses in the desired form can be set up at will. In our assumed ideal circumstances, competition has fulfilled its purpose, i.e. the phase of puberty has been surmounted. But as we know, the procreative powers must have acted back upon the organism for a certain time, if they are to bring its manhood and the harmonious condition of all organs and limbs to their fullest power. From this there arise, theoretically and practically, with the end of competition, two possibilities relative to the further existence of society, both of which point to the end of the capitalist system of production.

First, that party that came off victorious in the competitive struggle could do what common sense in the person of the amateur economist would expect it to do, namely produce everything the social organism requires, cheapen prices, increase sales everywhere and use the "profit" for expansion, and so on. This would be that absolutely indispensable retro-action of the procreative powers upon the organism itself—peace, freedom, security, bread, work, harmony and stability would come of themselves together with the greatest flexibility. Behind such "paradise" visions of common sense there lurks a profoundly healthy instinct, an instinct which, in pursuance of the desired state of affairs, might act as a mighty impulse in this direction, provided that no destruction of the means of production had taken place and that the conditions made it transparently evident that it was quite impossible to envisage any but the "natural" further development of society.

The untutored in economics, however, do not grasp that with this we arrive at a society which is elsewhere denoted by the fearful name "communist", and gives rise to such "anxiety", only because "ideal" processes can at best occur only on a laboratory scale, but not in real life. Nonetheless, essentially the same occurs in real life as in the laboratory and the difference consists, in the last resort, only in this, that the large-scale experiment can miscarry by reason of a whole set of circumstances (in human society, these are the concrete *historical* circumstances) which have nothing to do with the solution of the problem *in principle*. How much the process observed in the laboratory (or by abstract thought, which replaces the laboratory) is nonetheless decisive, is shown by the negative effects of an experiment which has failed. In the case of capitalism these are, ever deeper crises, wars and a progressive destruction of civilization, which can be foreseen by proper analysis of capitalist society and were already foreseen by Marx one hundred years ago. (By the way: Errors which did creep by in Marx, particularly with regard to the political form in which the *positive* dissolution of capitalist society was to take place, change nothing in the correctness of his economic analysis, but have only confirmed it the more terrifyingly.)

It remains to be shown why the attained inner limit of competition (its self-liquidation) leads—if we follow the healthy instinct of common-sense imagination—directly into the feared "classless, communist society". As our party which has victoriously survived in the competitive struggle has become a monopolist, and disposes of the entire means of production and raw materials and, in the assumed conditions, also employs the whole existing labour force, not only has the competition between capitalists and labourers ceased, but the victor also must perforce "buy" all he needs for further production and for his personal use from himself. That this is a senseless operation, which has nothing to do with "buying", is as clear as daylight—for the purpose neither any money nor exchange in any other form is required; the product obtained has simply to be *distributed* according to need. Thus at one stroke the entire money- and market-system with all its fiddle-faddle is abolished (as, for instance, advertising which is based on competition with commodities, its place being taken by a simple catalogue of consumer goods) and all erstwhile commodities are by the same stroke transformed into things, the "value" of which depends now only on their utility in use and no longer on their exchangeability. The erstwhile capitalist for his part ceases to be a capitalist, when he consumes what he consumes and can no longer sell (realize in money, exchange) the surplus product, but has to allocate it among various categories, such as, needs of the labourers, reproduction, expansion of production, own need, etc., and capitalist accumulation (in contradistinction to the building up of reserves) becomes as senseless as commercial exchange by one person with himself.

It is plain from this that the real wealth of society consists of the

useful things that can be produced and not of money which is only a medium of circulation and has become superfluous. Producing what the organism needs, cheapening "prices", increasing "sales" everywhere, and so on, can in these circumstances mean only destroying step by step the relation between labourer and capitalist and beyond that abolishing also in every other form the distinction between poor and rich. The dissolution of competition between capitalists organically does away with competition between workers and finally reveals that the earth and means of production belong to society as a whole and can have a "blessed" effect only when used by a society producing for itself. The capitalist shows himself to be a completely superfluous person, who has a valid existence only in terms of the artificial presuppositions of competition which render impossible the employment of wealth for the generality and thereby alone maintain the distinction between poor and rich or between classes generally.

"The right to work" and "property" are under capitalism nothing but a formal façade, behind which is hidden the reality, that the worker has to carry his labour-power to the market and can starve, if he finds no place in the competitive struggle. For the mass of workers and the poor, the right to work is in truth the "right" to lifelong misery, insecurity, propertylessness, culturelessness, a beggar's existence, and the right to be cheated out of miserable "pensions", petty savings and physical existence by crises, stock exchange crashes, inflations and wars. And what is the cause of crises, stock exchange crashes, inflations and wars? It is competition, which is by no means carried on only by means of "business", but also by means of destruction by which, in certain circumstances, the very competitor who before "profitably" sold arms of all kinds will be violently destroyed. With the end of competition, on the other hand, work ceases to be a burden and a curse. All individuals are freely and voluntarily occupied for themselves and society and can, according to their needs and inclinations, dispose of the things produced (e.g., they can become individual property-owners), since the production of consumer goods and the universal culture founded upon it know no limit, on the one hand, and since, on the other, there is no reason for the destruction of the produced values. It is the millenium of which mankind dreams, in which it is protected from the monotony of capitalist labour with its eternally recurring misery by an intense feeling for life, by the greatest diversity and by the fact that nature always puts new tasks before us and never allows us to come to a "complete" rest.

Secondly, the one and only remaining dictator of the capitalist economy could act against common-sense and try to maintain himself as the absolute dictator over all. In this event, he would have to "freeze" the economic development at a given point, and could only permit the same quantity to be produced, year in, year out. This could lead to a system of simple reproduction—to a general standstill and to the end of capitalism in a purely negative sense. In political respects this would be a slave society (quite irrespective of how agree-

able or disagreeable slavery is in ideal conditions), whereas any expansion of production would either potentially reintroduce competition (for instance, if certain layers were partially favoured), or proceed in the direction of the positive dissolution.

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Thus simple are matters concerning the impossibility of the capitalist system as an "eternal" economic form, if one has sufficient power of abstraction and does not look for "secrets", where there are none. For however enigmatic and unexplored specific life processes may still be at present, the fact that we have to die just because we live and that we have to die prematurely if our normal development be arrested at any point by internal or external forces—this fact is accepted by experts (whether or not they have an "explanation" for the fact at present) and laymen alike. In practice both accept self-evident things as given and unalterable; but both are at once alarmed and look for special reasons, so soon as a disturbance occurs which is felt to be "unnatural". Were one "at one stroke" to be able to make people understand that the laws of society are in principle the same as those of life and that profit economy with its general competition has the same limit as puberty (i.e. has either to dissolve itself into a higher stage of development or to degenerate in the most disgusting manner), the world would "at one stroke" be transformed. As matters stand at the moment, the whole world feels (each one, of course, in his own way and with his own suitably coloured "explanation") that a serious "disturbance" exists. Thousands upon thousands of contemporary individual testimonies could be quoted to prove to what an extraordinarily high degree social consciousness has been shaken to its foundations, and alarmed by the degeneration of capitalism. Whilst one can pass over the capitalists, their governments and their corrupt makers of opinion¹⁷, one single testimony, that of a "social psychologist", which fits in marvellously well with our statement of the matter, will be quoted. It begins indeed very promisingly:

By virtue of his reason man has built a material world the reality of which surpasses even the dreams and visions of fairy tales and utopias. He harnesses physical energies which will enable the human race to secure the material conditions necessary for a dignified and productive existence, and although many of his goals have not yet been attained there is hardly any doubt that they are within reach and that the *problems of production*—which was the problem of the past—is, in principle, solved. Now, for the first time in his history, man can perceive that the idea of the unity of the human race and the conquest of nature for the sake of man is no longer a dream but a realistic possibility. Is he not justified in being proud and in having confidence in himself and in the future of mankind?

(Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*)

17. What they say amounts to the following "explanation": There is not enough "pure" capitalism. In their way they are right, for if there were an "ideal" development, the evil would (as was shown before) most probably cure itself.

Apart from the fact that reason has played a much more pitiful rôle in the process of social development than would appear from the beginning of the quotation, this is, nevertheless, an excellent description of the one result of human history up to the present, which by far surpasses all other moments in importance. To express it in more sober and more precise terms: There is indeed no doubt but that, in spite of all the unreason and ignorance of immature humanity (hence more blind than seeing, driven forward more by the immanent logic of development than by clear insight), an objectively reasonable result has come about (and, amidst a myriad unrecognised, more or less conscious, processes, imposed itself upon isolated protagonists), the *reasonable* application of which is today the foremost task. The *production problem* (and that means here the problem of the social powers of procreation, which was the problem of *immature* society only to a very small degree "knowledgeable" about itself) belongs to the past and is, in principle, solved. Humanity obscurely feels and gradually becomes aware of the fact that in its embryonic state (the "primitive communist" community in which all members had equal rights even though they had different functions to fulfil) it was homogeneous, and that it had to pass through this whole vale of suffering, with division and mutual oppression, in order to overcome the harshness of the natural environment and put its existence on a secure footing. The persistent and renewed longing for a return to a lost paradise of human unity was in the event no mere dream, but a latent embryonic potentiality which has now come to maturity and is felt to be real.

Yet society is a unique phenomenon and has, owing to the lack of biological tradition, not yet learnt to use its productive apparatus in the right way, and still less, by its correct and continuous use, to create communities which are, in comparison with the original primitive communities, as highly developed as is contemporary man in relation to the first apeman. On the contrary, the division of functions (progressive division of labour) has led to their independence and has brought the organisation of society to a level even below that of the beehive, in which the division of labour with its systematic crippling of the working people (the worker bees) and its parasitism (the drones) nevertheless at least guarantees the preservation of the species and always recreates the same stable conditions.

In the beehive, the workers are the armed power and the real masters of the situation. No queen, no slavery, no competition can call into question the food, shelter or meaningful position they have within the system. What they lack in sexual pleasure is compensated for by their indestructible community and the preservation of the species based on the selection of the fittest.

No such happiness falls to the lot of capitalist humanity, whose productive and distribution apparatus is in the possession of parasites who rule according to the laws of competition and carefully block all the channels through which even so much as sufficient nourishment

for the whole body politic might flow. Of course, in reality there exists no ideal development and historical circumstances have not permitted society to grow up normally out of feudalism into its puberty (the competitive system) and by its self-liquidation bring about an economy directed to the satisfaction of human needs. We have, on the contrary, called the developed capitalist commodity economy or profit system based on free competition an *historically artificial* phenomenon—an opiate added from the outside which, while it to a certain extent furthers social development, yet at the same time produces a severe pathological craze that overmasters everything beyond all measure and remains incurable, so long as the system lasts.

As soon as the first possibilities of the phase of puberty were felt, the conscious (but by no means the "intelligent" or "reasonable") men of action in society set about using the vilest means in order to inject the poison of competition into the blood vessels of society. Independent peasant- and artisan-production had become ripe for transformation into capitalist means of production; but this transformation was artificially *enforced* and was a savage act of destruction.¹⁸ Thus competition unfolds itself unequally three and tenfold, and combines the existing inequalities with everything within reach that promises "profit". If the capitalists penetrate into all spheres and find everywhere zealous imitators, this nonetheless, in spite of their abominable and violent methods and all the suffering they bring upon humanity, has at least the immensely progressive effect, already noticed, of developing the productive forces to a level at which the perspective outlined by the cited "social psychologist" discloses itself. But alas, at this very moment, humanity feels more lost than ever, and almost with one voice bewails its fate. The American professor, Dr. Ralph Linton, towards the end of last year made the striking remark: "Man is a manlike ape who tries to live like a termite". This attempt of "the" manlike ape or apelike man must of course be heavily paid for, and leads our "social psychologist," after his eulogy of "man's" reason, to chant the following jeremiad:

Yet modern man feels uneasy and more and more bewildered. He works and strives, but he is dimly aware of a sense of futility with regard to his activities. While his power over matter grows, he feels

18. "Its annihilation, the transformation of the individualised and scattered means of production into socially concentrated ones, of the pigmy property of the many into the huge property of the few, the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence, and from the means of labour, this fearful and painful expropriation of the mass of the people forms the prelude to the history of capital . . . The expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious." So Marx towards the end of the section "The So-called Primitive Accumulation" (*Capital*, Vol I), the study of which cannot be too strongly recommended to anyone who wishes to get a correct idea of the nature of capital.

powerless in his individual life and in society. While creating new and better *means* for mastering nature, he has become enmeshed in a network of those means and has lost the vision of the end which alone gives them significance—*man himself*. While becoming the master of nature, he has become the slave of the machine which his own hands built. With all his knowledge about matter, he is ignorant with regard to the most important and fundamental questions of human existence: what man is, how he ought to live, and how the tremendous energies *within* man can be released and used productively.

The contemporary human crisis has led to a retreat from the hopes and ideas of the enlightenment under the auspices of which our political and economic progress had begun. The very idea of progress is called a childish illusion, and "realism", a new word for the utter lack of faith in man, is preached instead. The idea of the dignity and power of man, which gave man the strength and courage for the tremendous accomplishments of the last few centuries, is challenged by the suggestion that we have to revert to the acceptance of man's ultimate powerlessness and insignificance. This idea threatens to destroy the very roots from which our culture grew.

This is to be called a jeremiad, because not the "Idea" (which moreover is an only partially correct ideological reflex) but the real material development has inspired mankind with the strength and courage for the accomplishment of its achievements, and because not the "Idea" but the contradiction of competition and profit acting back upon itself destroys the basis of our culture in a *wholly material fashion*, which process the "Idea" reflects only more or less correctly (as in the case of the "social psychologist"). The ideologists throw about too carelessly generalizations which are out of place, and avoid correct generalizations too much. One constantly comes across terms like "man", "reason", "culture", "progress", etc.—in contradiction, one hears little about the limits within which these abstractions are valid.

Our "culture", for instance, is a very *impure* phenomenon, i.e. it is, on the one hand, burdened with all the rubble of the past which it transforms into saleable commodities, and is, on the other, *capitalist*, relative, *partial* culture, which has as its precondition the exclusion of the overwhelming majority from all culture, indeed, even from such "cultural products" as the opportunist political utterances of the insurance agent, Thomas Mann, or Hollywood gangster films. If one looks at the, so to speak, physique of capitalist culture, one sees a body whose spine is twisted in a thousand ways, whose nerve-fibres are torn and eaten away, whose limbs are deformed as if by rickets, which displays loathsomely hypertrophied muscles in one place and horrible thinness in another, here a repulsively protruding paunch and there a pigeon breast, whose organs do not function and must be artificially made to work, whose head has a swollen hydrocephalous look, whose "soul" manifests itself in trivial sentimentality (to the weakminded sentimentalist, how unbelievably "interesting", indeed, are the insipid "problems" of the shitty Herr Adrian Leverkühn and his "biographer", the "solution" or "interpretation" of which, in the sense of fodder manufacture for cultural parasites, influences society no less "powerfully" than the biographer's "good, faithful

Hélène" the rising and setting of the sun) and which has covered itself from head to foot with stinking sores.

One praises America and seeing some massive skyscraper or other, one overlooks the enormous lack of culture, the extreme backwardness and the cryingly uneven development of even this "model" capitalist country whose fate, in the true spirit of its enormous rubbish-producing industry, is literally "determined" by gangsters, parvenus, ruthless uneducated exploiters, extremely stupid militarists, literary dilettantes (the press in Russia and America, by the way, has in all probability the lowest level of any) and Sunday preachers of the calibre of Mr. Truman, who only too well personifies American mediocrity.¹⁹ It is, of course, not worth while quarreling with those who look at this fearful changeling, America, with closed eyes and look upon its insupportable commonplaceness as an ideal. If, however, one wants to know what American culture *is*, one has only to look at Asia, Africa and the old Europe. For these are capitalistically oppressed members of human society which, on top of everything else, have also had to suffer horrible mutilations of the most wanton nature at the hands particularly of the American barbarians (with whose systematic support the mass murderer and slave-owner in the Kremlin committed his robberies).

Everywhere one will find that culture and "ideas" are a threadbare Sunday garment which covers only that part of the body of society which is materially secure or parasitic, whereas all other parts, in the best of cases are allowed only to "sniff" the hem of this garment (the "culture" of the privileged layers of the working and middle classes), in the worst and most frequent of cases have never even heard of the existence of this tinsel. In other words: "culture" matches the material foundations fairly well and remains on the whole confined to the layers that profit by the system—it becomes the more shallow, the more lacking in content, the more mendacious, the more exclusively the business of parasites (who live by watering it down and selling the watered-down product to the suckers among the privileged layers), the more the material foundations shrink and convulse the system. For a further peculiarity of capitalism is the fact that the capitalists proper, the real exploiters of the "intellectual" or scientific achievements, the true goads in the development allegedly

19. A broadside against the "philosopher" Kurt Hiller, who has a culture-kitchen furnished quite "out of the common" (his speciality: the categorical imperative with illustrations worthy of the local advertizer) and who, among others, advises the "German people" to study the "physiognomy" of their "leaders". What a pity that he so scrupulously avoids putting Stalin's "mug" and Molotov's, the American "headmen" and, last but not least, his own countenance, under the microscope. However, when he calls Hegel the "criminal among philosophers" and attributes to him "the physiognomy of a brewer", one has, after careful consideration of his own features, every right to say to him: You, Sir, have the physiognomy of a counter-jumper—a *commis voyageur* in his own "intellectual" commodities produced by the dozen.

brought about by "reason", cared not a fig for culture, ideas, reason, progress and so on, and knew and know only one goal: profit, *coûte que coûte*.²⁰

Thus, if one talks about culture, reason, ideas, etc., at all, it must at once be emphasized that they are a partial by-product and bear no relation whatever to "man" or retro-act on "man". True, naked exploitativeness cannot do without scientific ideas, inventions, education, religious ceremonies, good motorways, newspapers, literature, pomp (ceremonial), art, philosophy, research and so on and is *compelled* to promote all these things which are insufferably combined with the very stuff of business and naked exploitativeness (nine-tenths of all "culture") in order to be able to push naked exploitativeness to its uttermost and *maintain* it. For the very things which are taken for genuine "culture", namely, "education", religion, philosophy, art and the press, literature, etc., are first for the most part *consciously* directed to the perpetuation of ignorance among mankind; second, are to such a degree narrow, one-sided, formal and confused that they

20. Our "social psychologist" naturally investigated the various social "characters" and arrives at the following remarkable description of the exploitative character:

"The exploitative character, with its motto 'I take what I need', goes back to piratical and feudal ancestors and goes forward from there to the robber barons of the nineteenth century who exploited the natural resources of the continent. The "pariah" and "adventure" capitalists, to use Max Weber's terms, roaming the earth for profit, are men of this stamp, men whose aim was to buy cheap and sell dear and who ruthlessly pursued power and wealth. The free market as it operated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries under competitive conditions nurtured this type. Our own age has seen a revival of naked exploitativeness in the authoritarian systems which attempted to exploit the natural and human resources, not so much of their own country but of any other country they were powerful enough to invade. They proclaimed the right of might and rationalized it by pointing to the law of nature which makes the stronger survive; love and decency were signs of weakness; thinking was the occupation of cowards and degenerates."

Interesting in this quotation is that the "free market" (competition) allows the exploitative type to grow rankly—for the rest it is an example of how correct generalizations (here influenced by the needs of the "psychologist") are too often avoided. For it is just this nakedly "exploitative type" concerned only with the most merciless exploitation who, in accordance with the law of the dominating quality, has shaped the features of bourgeois society and daily distorts them more and more. From the standpoint of the psychologist especially, the real, the *essential* history of bourgeois society (and of it, of none so much as of the history of America) *right up to the present day* can be presented as a real novel of gangsters, imposters, pirates and corruption, in which the "guardians of culture" play the rôles of smooth-tongued courtiers, beautiful concubines, witty, sarcastic jesters (Shaw, for instance, rightly calls himself with sycophantic self-irony "the court fool or jester of the bourgeoisie"), faddists and preachers in the desert. Al Capone, who as a notorious gangster and outlaw lived in his realm like a prince ("equality before the law" works so wonderfully that it is only exceptionally that one can bring "evidence" of some kind against any

cannot help entrenching ignorance and resist co-ordination in one whole; third, are objects of exploitation in the competitive struggle of all against all. It is, furthermore, true that the increase of wealth and the inclusion of more layers of people within the capitalist "circle of culture" produced some magnificent cultural achievements and inspired great spirits to deepen our knowledge and to depict as accomplished the "victory of reason", of progress and the realization of "man". It is, however, equally true that even the profoundest, most precious and most beautiful works of poets, thinkers and dreamers of humanity have become objects of mass exploitation (crowds of publishers, film-producers, theatre owners, radio-stations, concert-agents, societies, even mere conductors, magazines, "specialists" and so on, live off them), are the subject of very self-seeking aims and paralyse the energy of many people, i.e., turn them from the problems of decaying society by providing an "escape into higher things" to which this society has no present-day relation.

Competition speaks for itself in all fields by its devastating effect: The day of hopeful cultural beginnings as the necessary and unavoidable accompaniment of the age of social puberty is long since gone—the profoundly searching works of thought and the grandiose creations of art have, owing to the vast quantities of what is really culture-dung, been replaced by ever weaker imitations, technical or terminological sophistries, and the veriest *refuse* of culture. The "exact sciences" alone still show considerable advances, and this fact parallels chemical processes and production which, in a degenerating organism, also do

gangsters or pirates) and John Lewis who by the use of terror rose to leadership of the miners and who tolerates no "opposition"—these are the most comprehensive types of modern development. It is therefore very one-sided to place the responsibility for "the revival of naked exploitativeness" upon the authoritarian systems which exploit more the natural and human wealth of other countries. For the still living terrorists Stalin, Franco, Tito, Pieck, etc., exploit "their own" countries as ruthlessly as (where they are in the "favourable position" of Stalin) other countries, and in particular their "human" wealth. About the ruthless exploitation of "natural" wealth in "non-authoritarian" America, Fairfield Osborn at this very moment complains as follows (*Our Plundered Planet*):

"The powerful attacks now being made by small minority groups upon the public lands of the West have one primary motivation and one consuming object—to exploit the grazing lands and these last forest reserves for every dollar of profit that can be wrung from them. As we have seen, in other countries the profit motive, if carried to the extreme, has one certain result—the ultimate death of the land."

It is hardly necessary to add that naked exploitativeness and the most gruesome spoliation of man and nature have dominated capitalism at all times and once more especially in our own day take on senseless forms in all countries. Between the savage beginning and the still more savage end-stage of capitalism lies a short period that only appears less savage because the naked exploitativeness increases actual wealth, many share in the profit and the savagery therefore shows less glaringly on the surface. When, on the other hand, the possibilities are exhausted and far too many exploiters get in one another's way and exterminate one another with bombs and hand-grenades, the savagery of the beginning shows itself nakedly once more.

not come to a standstill but, on the contrary, often produce "fantastic flowers", up to the point at which precisely these bring about its final destruction. The remarkable thing about every one of these advances is that it is almost without exception related to the production of means of destruction (rockets, radar, supersonic speed, etc., up to Albert Einstein who ran to Roosevelt to acquaint him with the fact that the manufacture of the atom bomb was a "real possibility"), is inspired by the rage for destruction (the phase of delirium of competition) and finds application almost exclusively for destruction.

Sensitive and intelligent ideologists, artists and scientists (but who, again, on the average, betrayed no particularly "reasonable" or profound insight into the real essence of the problem) already early on started to complain about, and reflect on, the transformation of things into their negative and the "sense of unease in culture". They have left behind works prophetically negating the actual or glittering with ambiguities, upon which a whole industry has been built up (one has only to recall the quarrel of experts over the question of whether Nietzsche, Wagner and others were or were not incarnations of the "character of the German people" and precursors of fascism), with the result that the competitive struggle has taken possession also of the "sense of unease in culture" and that the struggle perpetually deepens the sense of unease. What reveals itself in these transformations of reflective thought is the colossal power of the law of the dominating quality on the negative side. So long as there was room for many rising capitalists, and so long as the fabric of society was not yet saturated with the poison of competition, everything went fairly well, even allowing for the unavoidable convulsions caused by the poison. A feeling of being at the dawn of things dominated the overwhelming majority—the growth of the organism, the already mentioned great achievements in thought and culture, the immense concentration of the means of production, the increase in productive power, the budding prosperity of the capitalist nations, the unification of the world by the world market and world trade, appeared to humanity to bring its ideal nearer to fulfilment, and to compensate for everything else—the countless victims, the endless. . . .

Alan Dutscher

IDEOLOGICAL ELEMENTS IN THE NEW CRITICISM

Simple justice demands that John Ball's "Some Comments on 20th Century Poetry" (*Contemporary Issues*, No. 35) be answered. Ball has not only completely and wilfully misread the text upon which he was commenting (Martha Millet's "The New Priests of Poetry", *Contemporary Issues*, No. 32), he has violated some fundamentals of democratic discussion, whether deliberately or out of sheer stupidity is beside the point.

The violation takes its crassest form when Ball writes concerning Mrs. Millet's attack upon "the new priests of poetry": "If Mrs. Millet is so dissatisfied with what modern poets write, one might well ask: what would she have the poet write?" Rather, "one might well ask", if one is interested in asking *well*: what are the reasons for Mrs. Millet's dissatisfaction? Are these reasons valid? Instead of dealing exclusively with Mrs. Millet's question, Ball introduces a new question—and proceeds to answer it in the following way: "Perhaps [!] the answer is to be found in the book of poems, *The Rosenbergs: Poems of the United States* . . . edited by Mrs. Millet." This "perhaps" is immediately converted into certainty, in practice, when Ball quotes from this book, passes judgment on its contents, compares it with the material written by the poets Mrs. Millet attacks, —a book totally unmentioned by Millet in her original article and having nothing whatever to do with that article. Insofar as it was possible at all to answer Ball's original question one could only have responded as follows: Perhaps the answer is to be found in the works of Whitman, Marvell, Donne, and Shelley—the only poets favorably cited in her article. Even on purely formal grounds if one is dissatisfied with what "modern poets" write, one can only be satisfied with other than *modern* poets.

However, this is not really the point at all. The point, as every child would recognize, is that Ball has factually smeared Mrs. Millet. And though it is quite true that the smear technique is a hallowed principle of our "democratic" society, it has never hitherto been permitted to go unchallenged in *Contemporary Issues*. Instead of dealing solely with the question raised, Ball has attempted to discredit the *questioner*, to brand her as "perhaps" a Stalinist. This is quite as disgusting in its way as for a McCarthy to answer a physicist who questioned H-bomb production: If you are so dissatisfied with constructing H-bombs, one might well ask: What would you like

to construct? Perhaps the answer is to be found in the fact that you once edited a book on pacifism. The *methods* of Ball and McCarthy are the same, the sole difference lies in the *consequences* of their respective smears.

In *Contemporary Issues*, No. 23, Ernst Zander wrote of the "rules" of democratic discussion: "Persons who stand *completely outside* but want to criticize us or to discuss a question, are received *without prejudice* . . ." [Emphasis added.] Let us even assume that Mrs. Millet is a *proven* Stalinist ("completely outside") who wishes to discuss a question with us. Can she be received in any other way than without prejudice, i.e., without considering her Stalinism, but solely her question? Particularly is this the case if Stalinism plays no role whatever in her question, as indeed it does not. For there are a great many non- and anti-Stalinists who oppose the particular ideological tendency Mrs. Millet contends against: "radicals", conservatives", "ordinary" readers, etc. Nor are the reasons for her opposition necessarily connected with Stalinism; objectively speaking, as we shall see, Millet's article (whether or not she is aware of this) is anti-Stalinist, just as, objectively speaking, it is Ball who sometimes resorts to Stalinism *in discussion*, though he is an "anti-Stalinist". The label is nothing, the content everything.

We have said that Ball's article violates fundamental tenets of democratic discussion and have illustrated this with the crassest violation. There are other, less glaring, violations of principle, however. And because of their nature (nothing is more serious than breach of principle!) exposure is necessary. In the process of exposure, Ball's innumerable *errors* will also come to light. It is our feeling that exposure of these errors, too, will prove worthwhile, first as a study on both the writer's and the reader's part of what Nietzsche happily called "the incomparable art of reading well", and secondly as a discussion, which we trust will be valuable in its own right, of the concept of alienation. Let us begin at the very beginning. Ball writes:

Martha Millet's article is a polemic directed against "modern poetry". Now it is surely convenient to place all the poetry (or for that matter all intellectual production) of our century on a Procrustean bed in order to stretch fact so as to fit a preconceived theoretical framework. One then has a formula which can be applied mechanically to give an all-inclusive condemnation: *worthless, inferior!* But attractive as this point of view is, it is nonetheless grossly oversimplified; to hold it is to sidestep the responsibility of taking a measured and critical attitude in order to weigh the virtues and faults of poetry today.

A little further on Ball writes: "Only two important poets, Eliot and Pound, are attacked [by Mrs. Millet] by name". If only two poets are attacked by name, this casts a somewhat less than brilliant light on Millet's piece as a polemic directed against "modern poetry" or "all the poetry of our century". Nor are matters improved when, a few sentences later, Ball writes: "Mrs. Millet speaks of 'our enshrined elite of poetry' . . ." If one speaks of an "elite", more-

over an "enshrined elite", this again must be somewhat different from "all the poetry of our century". Things only get worse as we proceed. Ball writes:

An indication of the lack of precision that runs through Mrs. Millet's article is the astonishing fact that she never explicitly defines the poetry that she is criticizing. Although no poets not [!] in the school [!] of Eliot, Pound, and Tate are even mentioned [!], the lack of qualifications [!] in Mrs. Millet's criticism leads one to believe that her critique is directed against all poetry written in our century.

First, if no poets not in the school of Eliot, Pound, and Tate are even mentioned, this would seem to mean that no poets not in the school of Eliot, Pound, and Tate are meant. What better qualification is needed? Secondly, Ball initially wrote that only two important poets are attacked by name. Now he writes that three are mentioned, and the *fact* is that four members (not necessarily poets) *of the school* are mentioned, for Millet "mentioned" or "attacked" also Hulme, whom she described as "the philosophical head of the priesthood". This casts a somewhat more than dull light on the question of where the "lack of precision" lies.

A little later, Ball writes: "Of course, it is possible [yes, isn't it?] that Mrs. Millet intended to criticize only one [!] school of modern poetry. But in that case, she has no business [!] speaking of "The New Priests of Poetry" without carefully qualifying her words. What she has done, in fact, is to make generalized remarks about modern poetry on the basis of a critique of one [!] tendency." Now if it *was* a "critique of only one tendency" it is difficult to see why it is only "*possible*" that Mrs. Millet intended to criticize only one school of modern poetry. Moreover it is important to recognize that Millet never once used the phrase "modern poetry" in her original article. The first sentence of Ball's article is, therefore, to say the least, misleading: He wrote that Millet's article was a "polemic directed against 'modern poetry'". The placing of the latter two words in quotation marks might lead the reader to suppose that Millet used them. This is, to repeat, simply not so.

Summation: Since Ball admits that Millet attacks only a certain number of writers by name, speaks of an "enshrined elite" and has written a critique of one tendency it is absurd to accuse her of writing a polemic against all the poetry of our century. Moreover, if one turns to her article in an unbiased fashion, one is continually struck by her use of such expressions as "the cult", "the priesthood" (cult, priest, and priesthood are specifications—if all modern poets were cultists or priests there would be neither cult nor priesthood) "new monasticism" (do all modern poets believe in God?), "promulgators of the dogma of man's impotence and blessed passivity" (do all poets promulgate this doctrine?), "Eliot and his confreres" (are all modern poets the confreres of Eliot?), "minor poets in power" (are all our poets in power?), "leaders of this regime", "the elevated" (what of the poets not elevated?), and, on the last page, "New Critics", the "official" designation of the tendency Millet is attacking, is even

given. There is only one sentence in Millet's entire article which can be described as imprecise. This is her opening sentence: "R. L. Stevenson wrote on what captivated him in Whitman—and even more unique it seems today when one looks at contemporary American poetry." However, even "contemporary American poetry" is a far cry from "all the poetry of our century". More important, almost immediately thereafter Millet qualifies this by talking of our "enshrined elite of poetry", and never again, as witness the specifications above which include every single one used, is she imprecise in designating the object of her critique. Any loyal reader, anyone interested in getting at the point of an article rather than "getting" its author by hook or crook, would acknowledge the precision of Mrs. Millet's marksmanship if all but one of her ten shots found their target.

Ball raises another similar "objection". He writes: "Even her title, *The New Priests of Poetry*, is ambiguous. Who are the 'priests'? The poets or the critics?" In this connection we recall the disturbingly arrogant "... she has no business speaking of 'The New Priests of Poetry' without carefully qualifying her words". First, how can one "carefully qualify" a title without its ceasing to be a title? The only reasonable demand is that the qualification occur in the article—and, as shown, it does. Secondly, how unambiguous is the title of Ball's article, *Some (!) Comments on 20th Century Poetry*. That these are indeed *some* comments it would be hard to argue, but that they apply to 20th Century Poetry is not even so much ambiguous as plain wrong: enormous contributions to 20th Century Poetry are left entirely unmentioned by Ball who is, in fact, only concerned to defend the New Priests from Millet. Thirdly: It is solely Ball's own ignorance that is responsible for his missing the point of Millet's title—the play of "New Priests" with the familiar designation for this school, "New Critics". Actually, Millet's designation is more satisfactory from point of content than the familiar one; in any case, since Millet explicitly mentions New Critics, speaks of Hulme, as the philosophical head of the priesthood (he is recognized by all people interested in poetry as indeed the philosophical head of the New Critics), and carefully qualifies the object of her attack throughout the article, it must be said that neither article nor title are ambiguous. The one is perfectly appropriate to the other. Finally, the "question", "Who are the 'priests'? The poets or the critics?" is absurd, since one and the same person is, in the case of Eliot, Tate, and Pound, poet and critic and inasmuch as Hulme is only described by Millet as "the philosophical head of the priesthood". Nor can Ball's comment, also on the first page of his article, about the phrase New Priests ("But, by no stretch of the imagination can either Eliot or Pound be considered 'new'") carry any weight, if one comprehends the reference to the official designation "New Critics". If one does not, that is, unfortunately, one's own deficiency in knowledge or imagination. However, whatever one's deficiencies in this regard, the ability to read and a certain fairness

in attitude are all that are required to see that Millet's article is not a polemic directed against "modern poetry".

Unfairness recurs in Ball's article. Thus, still on the first page, Ball writes: "She [Mrs. Millet] also comments on the obscurantism and 'bogus scholarship' of contemporary critics and poets. But her ideas are ambiguous and hard to pin down." What is hard to pin down is the reason for Ball's quotation marks, for it is our same little Ball, which some pages later bounces up with the following: "In the artificial world of the university critic what counts are the obscure allusions that give him a chance to display his pedantry . . ." And again, two sentences further, Ball refers to " . . . those papers which the critic must continually publish if he wishes to advance his career." Apparently then, if Millet speaks of bogus scholarship, quotation marks are in order; if Ball talks of virtually the same thing, they disappear. This is a minor instance of Ball's use of the infamous double standard. But what makes the whole episode so revealing of Ball's deficiencies is the fact that it is not even Millet who uses the phrases "bogus scholarship"—but *Eliot himself*, when speaking of his notes to *The Waste Land*! Ball's really incredible imprecision (to use the kindred word) is nowhere so clearly shown as here. Nor do matters stand any better as regards Ball's note that Mrs. Millet "comments on the obscurantism . . . of contemporary poets and critics"—for ten pages further he remarks: "The 20th century has seen subjectivism develop to the point where much poetry is chaotically *obscure* and disorganized in form. These are really the two things most seriously wrong with many modern poems, and it is interesting that Mrs. Millet *discusses neither*." [Emphasis added.]

Let us now turn to Mrs. Millet's characterization of "the world view" of the New Priests and Ball's evaluation of same. Mrs. Millet wrote, it will be remembered:

The world as they see it, is composed of chaotic, mutually repellent and destructive *particles*, engaged in miseries not nearly as vivid or compelling as those of the damned in hell. Men are devoid of will, aim, or direction. Their only hope of contact with one another is through an agent, a third party "above", which, of course, is God—a God in their image.

Ball's comment on this was:

Is this view a correct one? As a matter of fact, the world of "destructive *particles*", alienated from each other and following out, in competition, mutually destructive paths is not only the world "as they see it", but the world as it is; not the whole world as it must be immutably, but the world as it is today. For those of us who do not accept God as a way out, Eliot can be a guide through Inferno; for Purgatorio and Paradiso, we may choose more suitable guides.

If we carefully examine both statements we note that where Millet wrote, "The world, as they see it, is composed of chaotic, mutually repellent and destructive *particles*", Ball has rendered this as, "the world of *particles* alienated from each other and following out, in competition, mutually destructive paths". It is Ball, not "they", who introduced alienation in or through competition. It is in the essence

of the case that "they" did not use the concept of alienation through competition because it stands in complete contradiction to the "hope" that the only means of overcoming "alienation" is through God: if alienation through competition means anything it is that alienation can *only* be overcome when and if competition, as a system of social exploitation, is overcome. But the notion of overcoming competition as the means of re-establishing human *relations* (instead of mere "contact"—which is always present and has the sense, under capitalism, of the American idiom "making contacts", i.e., of the "relation" of men for purposes of mutual exploitation) is totally alien to the world view of Eliot, for whom God, the usual quack prescription, suffices. Historically speaking and in point of content, the notion of alienation, first introduced by Hegel, meant the sundering of organic human relations by capitalist competition. Indeed, if men's only hope of contact with each other is through God then *human* relations are *per se* impossible, and alienation of men is a permanent feature and hence not alienation at all. Kierkegaard's "re-interpretation" of Hegel's concept of alienation to mean alienation from God, which "re-interpretation" Eliot's world view leans on, has nothing whatever to do with alienation of men in or through competition.

Moreover, "particles . . . devoid of will, aim, or direction" describe no human being anywhere at any time in the world; for never in his history has man been *devoid* of any of these elements, he has always been at least a factor in shaping his own history. Particles devoid of will, aim, or direction could never overcome alienation, could never make more than a mechanical aggregate rather than a living, organic community. Eliot has reified the present historical *tendency* (not by any means a finished product) which reduces human relations to mediated contact between things (particles). The notion that would substitute contact between things for relations between men is devoid of insight. Eliot cannot, therefore, serve as a guide through Inferno, for in presenting the tendency toward thingification as an accomplished and indeed irreducible datum he is not presenting the world as it is.

The world view confirms this in still another way by speaking of "the world . . . as composed of chaotic, mutually repellent and destructive *particles*" and the "enlightened" Ball agrees that this description is of the world "as it is". However, it is surely not the "world" which is composed of destructive particles; only the ruling minority of the world can be accurately described as *destructive*; the majority is solely the victim of destructive particles. The majority of mankind is not *responsible* for destruction, it neither owns nor controls the means thereof. Moreover, massive resistance to destruction, factual human relations among the masses for the purpose of fighting destructive particles (despite all attempts artificially to fractionize the majority it nevertheless continues to exhibit tremendous solidarity on issues of majority interest—note the clear opposition of the majority in all countries where these are immediate issues, to

efforts of destructive particles to bring chaos and destruction to the world; opposition which takes varied forms and shows varied depths in different places, but with the same underlying theme; opposition whose range includes the struggle against rearmament, nuclear weapons manufacture and testing, erection of military bases, conscription, brinkmanship and militarism; this well-nigh universal self-defence of the majority is an expression of the mass need to overcome alienation, whose essence is that at its extreme it literally *forces* masses into opposition, whose essence is that it necessarily creates the need for its self-overcoming) indicate that men today have much more than mere "hope of contact."

The lack of distinction between "the world" and the "destructive particles" is hardly an accidental element in the world view of "our enshrined elite" (whether of poetry, government, science, all of our official elites are made of the same "metal"); the lack of distinction is a central element used by destructive particles to escape the fact of their *complete* responsibility for destruction. We may sum up this matter by saying that Millet's description of the world view of the destructive particles is perfectly adequate, but that Ball in his hasty defense, objectively speaking, of destructive particles (the defense consisting in agreeing that the world as it is today is totally alienated, totally composed of destructive particles) has not understood a word of Millet's critical description of ruling ideology. Ball's position, then, constitutes a perfect identity with the latter in that the world as it is is seen as a *finished* product (hence, it is the world as "they" would *like* to see it, rather than "as it is"). Nor does Ball's proviso that it is "not the whole world as it must be immutably" alter anything; for if "the world" is composed of destructive particles this must mean the "whole world" and if the whole world is composed of destructive particles, then it must "immutably" remain so.

That Ball has generally accepted the dominant ideology becomes even more clear from his discussion of "sex". Ball begins by quoting some lines from Eliot's *The Waste Land* and he writes:

... they certainly do not exhibit what Mrs. Millet calls ... "a certain high joy in living". They do not display "a wholesome meaning ... in the relation ... between men and women". And yet they describe [!] something about modern life that everyone, including Mrs. Millet, knows is true. We live in a world in which, *on the whole*, sex does not have a wholesome meaning.

First, let us note that Ball in his own singularly unwholesome way has reduced "relations ... between men and women" to "sex", a characteristic reduction of ruling ideology. We may also note that Millet, in the original wrote: "They reject the idea [!] of a wholesome meaning [!] in the world [!], in the relation of man to man [!] or between men and women." This means, if words have any meaning at all, that the ruling ideology rejects the mere idea of a wholesome meaning in *any* human relation. Millet is not saying that dehumanization of relations is absent from the world; she is saying that the very *idea* of human relations is rejected by ruling ideology

(for the good reason that such an idea could lead to an attempt to institute such relations generally which would necessarily mean the end of the *status quo*).

Ball continues: "Is it possible for sex to have a healthy meaning, perhaps in another society? The poem simply does not say." Of course, it was not Mrs. Millet who commented on this particular poem but Ball. Mrs. Millet was addressing herself to the ruling ideology as expressed in the *corpus* of "our enshrined elite"; Ball is only commenting on some lines of poetry. Therefore, whether or not the poem "simply" says is quite beside the point. It is clear, as Ball will show us in a moment, that the *ruling ideology as expressed in the corpus of "our enshrined elite" does answer Ball's question with an unequivocal negative*. Ball continues:

Mrs. Millet . . . [quotes] Eliot . . . "that the sexual act as evil is more dignified, less boring, than as the natural 'life-giving' cheery automatism of the modern world". I do not know the passage from Eliot, but it seems obviously satiric: "life-giving" is even written with quotation marks. The key word in the passage, completely ignored by Mrs. Millet, is *automatism*.

Here is the answer to Ball's question: "the sexual act as evil" precludes a healthy *meaning* to sex in *any* society. Nor is *this* concept satiric; it is absolutely central for Eliot, who is a firm believer in original sin, as even Ball's next sentence tells us ("Even the belief in Original Sin to which Eliot has *undoubtedly* retreated"—emphasis added). That the sexual act is evil is a disgusting superstition which has caused untold spiritual and physical misery; a superstition necessary to ruling ideology because it burdens man with guilt and thus renders him submissive to "our enshrined elite".¹ To accept the notion of the sexual act as evil, as we shall see Ball does, is to accept the "moral" code of the destructive particles (in this case destructive of natural, life-giving—with or without quotation marks—values). Compare Eliot's words with Millet's: "Human propagation is never sinful, except as the fundamental principle of life is seen in reverse." Millet already stands on a far higher level than Ball-Eliot with this, even though her formulation, with "propagation", can be improved upon. It should also be said that Eliot's statement can hardly be called "satiric"—"idiotic" is more nearly the appropriate word; for how something "natural" can be an "automatism" (natural and automatic are after all antonyms) is something that "textual analysis" alone can "explicate". Ball continues:

Even [!] the belief in Original Sin to which Eliot has undoubtedly retreated [!] has at least [!] this to be said for it: it elevates Man [the capitalization is priceless! Ball elevates man by capitalizing "m"] to a position of dignity [Ah, dignity again—this is what old maids like Eliot and young virgins like Ball absolutely require], albeit tragic [?] dignity. He is worthy [get this: original sin which "proves" the worthlessness of man here makes man "worthy"] to play a major part in a drama [?] of universal significance [such

¹ See: "The Function of Anti-Sex", by John Clarkson, *Contemporary Issues*, No. 34.

big, fat, soft, woolly, fuzzy words!). He is higher than a machine [what a discovery!]. He is not an automaton [this surely follows from the preceding!]. However [!], the social significance [what significance, pray, were we speaking of before if not the social significance?] of accepting a doctrine such as Original Sin must [!] not be forgotten [who forgot it, if not Ball himself! Millet positively stressed it throughout her article].

First, let us note that with "even", "retreated", "at least" and "however", Ball has his behind firmly entrenched between two stools; he is able to show his superiority to original sin, though he accepts it as an *elevation* of man. This is "at least" less than forthright. Secondly, let us note that the doctrine of original sin (without the capitals Ball is so fond of using for all elevations of man) has "at least" this to be said for it: it degrades man to a position lower than an automaton—for not only is man devoid of will, aim or direction and consequently an automaton functioning within the automatism of fatal destiny, but, more unfortunate than an automaton, man is eternally burdened by guilt.

But Mrs. Millet said all this very well indeed in her article:

To reach other men at all (assuming this is desirable and possible) [with her "at all", "desirable" and "possible", Mrs. Millet shows clearly her understanding that "our enshrined elite" accepts and indeed consciously deepens alienation], he [man] must find himself in God, unquestioning [!], blindly [!] accepting. For who is he to presume [!] to question or know? He accepts [!] discipline [!] and submission [!], for what ends he knows not. He does not even know if there are ends. Man, then, is like the little child—not the child who goes forth each day, but the child who does not grow up. This belief is in itself an act of volition and the will (which is generally denied, but is readily allowed for the "approved" purpose), so used, has made the choice of regression. [This is excellent!]

The advantages of this choice are evident. With this purchase of indulgence, a man's obligation to the living world is automatically [!] cancelled. He need concern himself no longer with his own fate or that of others. He leaves both to stronger, "impalpable" hands.

Again, she writes:

If man cannot make his own world, if he need not take responsibility for his social acts; if he exists most perfectly in total submission to an unquestioned super-power . . . then the possibility of changing the world is ruled out . . . In today's world . . . [this] . . . can only be put forward with intent to defraud.

Compare these clear, uncompromisingly honest and forthright statements with Ball's kittenish equivocations, his "even", "however", "at least" and "retreated"—and his acceptance of the elevating value of original sin. Ball, in the very same paragraph, remarks: "Given the objective bleakness, some such dogma is an 'easy' one to acquiesce in—especially when it means that one then has a ready-made rationale for standing aside from participation in the struggle to change the world." Note "some such dogma" instead of clearly saying "the dogma of original sin"; note that the word *easy* is written with quotation marks, and, finally, note that the phrasing is "when it means" rather than "*because* it means". Objectively speaking, these are *scoundrelly* equivocations. But that even "some such dogma" may mean "standing aside from participation in the

struggle to change the world", is too much of an admission for Ball. For he later writes:

But when Mrs. Millet says that the Quartets present an "all permeating desire to avoid struggle and learning from life" she is simply wrong. In fact, her strictures appear directly underneath another phrase from *East Coker* quoted by the critic George Williamson: "For us, there is only the *trying*." [Emphasis mine.] One main theme of the poems is the necessity of continuing the struggle in spite of all setbacks and in spite of the reality of death . . .

"For us, there is only the *trying*" may sound magnificent, actually it is quite absurd. For the emphasis is not to be placed, as Ball places it, on "trying", but on "only". And to say that for us there is *only* the trying is at least a gratuitous assumption. But it is, in actuality, far more than that. For such a notion gives substance to Millet's castigation of the Eliot school as "promulgators of the dogma of man's impotence": for the man for whom there is only the trying is the man for whom *impotence is a reality*. If there is *only* the trying, why continue the "struggle" at all? The struggle, under such conditions can only be viewed as a treadmill, and unless man is as brainless as the mouse on the treadmill (which Eliot believes, as we shall see) he would be better off to avoid the pointless struggle. But it is precisely the pointlessness of the struggle which is to be questioned. The doctrine that for us there is only the struggle is really designed as a *lever of rule*; it *prepares man for submission* to the will of God (actually of his "priests"—the rulers of the earth). Millet understands this very well, for she writes:

But the promulgators of the dogma of man's impotence and blessed passivity are far from accepting a passive role for themselves [!]. In espousing what they do, in embracing reaction, outspokenly with regard to political institutions and social castes, implicitly with regard to what the mass of mankind ought [!] to do and think, they bring all their casuist sinews to the cause of *laying down laws for others* [!].

The case then is the same as that with "the will (which is generally denied, but is readily allowed for the 'approved' purpose)". Nor do matters improve with "the necessity of continuing the struggle . . . in spite of the reality of death". This may sound courageous, actually it, too, is nonsense. A truly courageous man, Spinoza, wrote the famous words: "The free man thinks of nothing less than death". And why?—just because of its *unreality*. Since this "question" of the overriding reality of death is the central one for many tendencies within the camp of modern existentialism, and has thus once again become a main prop for ruling ideology (death becomes the overriding consideration of the living, the main source of *angst*, the main proof of the finitude of man's capabilities, and the main source of the eternal hopelessness of his lot) it behooves us to counter this "idea", which Ball apparently accepts, with the following golden words of Epicurus:

Accustom thyself then to the thought that death concerns us not; for all good and evil is a matter of sensation. Therefore the true reflection that death is no concern of ours, makes our mortal life one of enjoyment, since this thought does not add an endless length of days, but does away with the longing after immortality. For nothing

in life has terrors for him who has once truly recognized the fact that not to live is not a matter of dread. Thus it is a vain thing to fear death, not because its presence but because the anticipation of it brings us pain. For how can the anticipation of a thing pain us when its reality does not? There is, therefore, in death nothing to trouble us. For when we are in life, death is not there, and when death is there, we are not. Therefore death does not concern either the living or the dead.

Ball returns to the subject of the world view of Eliot & Co., some pages later:

Frequently, all that is left [!] for the poet to write of is alienation, his own and others. The poet has been alienated even from nature . . . it [!] has become an object to be precisely described—an object completely external and other.

Ball, once more, completely misses the point. For just as one can hardly say that all that is "left . . . to write of is alienation", so one cannot say that "nature . . . has become an object". The rulers *choose to deal with man and nature as though they were objects*, and ruling ideology obligingly describes them as such. It is quite wrong to say that nature has become an object. She remains—nature;—it is the rulers who now treat her as an object. Millet very brilliantly notes:

Eliot [and he can stand for all the ideologists] . . . looks for [!] an *impersonal* medium . . . [he] sees [!] the poet's function as unmotivated [!] and mechanical [!].

The poet makes poetry, the metaphysician makes metaphysics, the bee makes honey, the spider secretes a filament; you can hardly say that any of these agents [!] believes: he merely does.

Here, incidentally, is the proof that Eliot regards man's struggles as of the same nature as those of the mouse on the treadmill. Here, too, is additional light on Ball's contention that the ideology of the New Critics *elevates* man. Eliot, thoroughly alienated, *chooses* to regard man, nature, poetry, etc., in an exclusively mechanical, "objective", impersonal way. Millet develops this very well:

Eliot explains . . . [that he has] had to overcome [!] the unusual anguish of [his] responses to this pain-producing life on earth, to develop [!] the *impersonal* manner in [his] poetry. [He] has achieved this so well that [his] own painful struggles are not at all apparent, and the feelings of those few [!] others that *count* are never hurt in any vital part.

Mrs. Millet then quotes John W. Aldridge who wrote of the New Critics:

The writing that comes out of this world is distinguished by its overwhelming [!] accuracy, its painful attention to detail. Produced out of morbid [!] fear of emotion [!], it loses itself in trivia [!] so that it will not have to express emotion [!].

Eliot, then consciously "develops" his ability to overcome response to the suffering of nature and man. The mechanism of this desensitization (dehumanization) is "overwhelming accuracy" and "painful attention to detail". In order to avoid involvement in human suffering Eliot detaches himself from it and adopts a purely "scientific" (descriptive) attitude. Suffering, except possibly of those few who count, is avoided. People are treated as automata to be described, rather than to be sympathized with. The cultivation

of *bourgeois* objectivity (positivism), which regards social injustice as a fact like any other—to be described rather than to be overcome—is the result. Historically, positivism comes into its own after the bourgeoisie has consolidated its control over the social system; no longer requiring the help of the masses, who indeed soon appear as the “mob”, the enemy, the bourgeoisie soon comes to regard the suffering of the people with indifference (unemotionally). The deliberate cultivation of indifference to the needless suffering of man and nature is alienation: the treatment of men and nature as things. Ball continues:

The problem of alienation is intrinsic in the contemporary world. It is a problem that all serious modern poets must face as best they can [indeed it would be somewhat difficult for them to face it better than they can]. Mrs. Millet attacks one of the effects [!] of alienation, the social views of Eliot and Pound, without naming the cause [as though that were important! Ball has demonstrated precisely its unimportance by “naming”, without understanding, the cause]. And because she does not analyze [that she does, as Ball does not] the cause, she does not appreciate the most [!] satisfactory attempt to grapple with it that has been made, the deliberate cultivation of artifice.

Without going into the “artifice” question (or is it the artificial question?) we may nevertheless note that Ball’s example of this most satisfactory attempt to overcome alienation is curiously described. He writes: “Eliot’s *Four Quartets*, for example, have dealt with abstract philosophical and intimately personal questions that poetry never handled so effectively before.” Now, why poetry *should* handle abstract philosophical questions, we do not know. It is bad enough for philosophy to occupy itself endlessly with abstract questions; it is much worse for poetry to do the same. This more than ever vindicates Miller’s thesis that Eliot deliberately eschews emotion and factually accepts alienation from man’s real (as distinguished from abstract) concerns. Nor does Eliot’s interest in “intimately personal” questions help, for since Eliot merely describes (without emotion) these intimately personal matters, he remains as *impersonal* as ever and only re-enforces alienation. We should understand that literary positivism, abstractness, is not a characteristic of the New Critics alone. Impersonality, “science”, toughness, dryness, callousness, indifference is evident in most of the literature of the age from the lowest shit by Mickey Spillane to the “highest” shit by Ernest Hemingway.

For all of Ball’s concern with the alienation of the artist and art from society, he has two “cheery” notes to sound. After informing us that “serious art” is no longer part of the life of a “substantial body” of people, Ball qualifies this in a footnote, as follows: “But not quite. Jazz has an audience, and modern architecture has buyers. They are two of the most exciting and at their best, most *human* artistic developments of our century.” Since Ball offers no other proof to substantiate his claims for either the humanity or the excitement of jazz or modern architecture, we are, I suppose, to conclude that the fact that they have an audience is sufficient proof. But,

of course, this is nonsense. Dick Tracy, Nikita Khrushchev, Elvis Presley, and "Ike" Eisenhower all have large audiences which have not made them any the less inhuman or boring. The mere detail that there is an audience (better, a *market*) for a commodity, today less than ever proves that it satisfies a *human* need or is genuinely stimulating. On the contrary, most mass produced commodities today serve only pseudo needs and do not so much heighten as they deaden the faculties and senses. Concretely: with a rising population and a limited supply of old houses, what are people to buy if not "modern architecture"?—which, for a "substantial body" of people, is terribly unexciting and inhuman (the well-known uniformity and drabness of the new suburbia and exurbia). Unquestionably, there are a very few examples of modern architecture which are exciting and human, but for any substantial body of people, much less for the people generally, modern architecture is a colossal realtors' fraud which has meant in practice: shoddy, expensive, ill-constructed, uninteresting, tiny boxes, which can only in a formal sense be called fit for human habitation. "At their best" neither jazz nor modern architecture has a substantial audience. The mass or substantial audience for jazz is provided with mechanical, commercial, inhuman jingles and noise. Ball himself later writes: "Not only is there an incredibly tasteless, vulgar mass culture, but the ruling classes now are just as boorish as anybody else." Surely nothing is more incredibly tasteless and vulgar in this "mass culture" than mass-produced jazz and modern "architecture".

In any case, in opposition to Ball and all other pundits we maintain that "mass culture" is a *contradictio in adjecto*. The masses are forcibly deculturated under capitalism and culture has now become the property of an incredibly small number of *individuals* (there is not a single "body" in the world, unless it be an *insubstantial* one that is possessed of it). What is today called "mass culture" is either the attempt to stamp out in the millions the socially "desirable" type, or it is a euphemism for Roman circuses. The masses are incapable of a culture of their own; what passes for mass culture then is the *substitute for culture* fed to the masses *from above*; it is the cancellation of individuality, the reinforcement of the mass character (anonymity) of the present age. Therefore we say it is deculturation (de-individuation) of the masses. A cultured society constitutes the social basis for the flowering of individuality; but individuality (self-realization as opposed to the realization of the socially "desirable" type) is extraordinarily rare. For mass society based on massive (social and cultural) inequality is to be substituted *the society of cultured individuals*.

In his hot defense of the *status quo*, Ball provides some real beauties. Savor this one:

Pound's attitude toward language in poetry may be summed up in his aphorism: "Poetry must be *as well written as prose*". The poets of the 20th century reached out for new forms and new styles able to express the complicated attitude toward the new age of men and women who whatever anyone says are as sensitive as any, and

who, unlike some of us, have no ready answers to the problems they face. And also they sought and sometimes [!] found a new integration of the common speech into the framework of their art—that quality which makes the Elizabethans' so delightful.

You may read the second sentence about 50 times but you will still make no sense of it. What have the "poets of the 20th Century" (in reality, the New Critics) to do with "men and women who are as sensitive as any" (any what?); indeed, who are these men and women with the "complicated attitude to the new age", who suddenly emerge from Ball's complicated brain? Aside from their complicated attitude (surely such an attitude is a virtue!) they are only identified for us as "men and women who whatever anyone says (who is anyone?) are as sensitive as any (Ah, we at last have the secret to Pound's aphorism which *should* read: 'My poetry is as well written as Ball's prose') and who, unlike some of us (who are some of us?) have no ready answers to the problems they face" (undoubtedly with a complicated attitude they have no answers, ready or otherwise). In our good-naturedly sincere quest of truth we are forced to persist: Is it a virtue not to have ready answers to the problems one faces? Or is it that answers are good to have, but should not be "ready"? Ball's attitude toward language may be summed up by saying: Whatever anyone says, Ball is as insensitive, his sentences are as complicated, and he has as few answers to the problems he faces, as *anybody* else. He has indeed sought and sometimes (as in the second sentence above) found a new integration of the common speech into the framework of his article. So new is this integration that no one understanding the common speech can understand him. He is, in this respect, akin to Eliot and Pound, whom he so much admires; they also have integrated the common speech so well into the framework of their art that there is not one common reader in 10,000 who can understand them.

It would be objectively wrong, however, to dismiss this whole passage simply as absurd. The phrases "whatever *anyone* says" and "unlike *some of us* have no ready answers to the problems they face" are, of course, innuendos, characteristic equivocations of a man who is considerably less than completely forthright, hence considerably less than completely democratic in public discussion. Whether Ball is afraid to openly name the object of his "attack", or whether he is too sly to do so, the fact remains that such innuendos *violate principle*. It is because of "little touches" like this that Ball *must* be treated very sharply. The "constant reader" will recall that both the diagnosis and the prescriptive measures indicated in such cases was made some years back:

For good democratic reasons, everyone has to be treated according to his merits, otherwise the dubious elements, burdened by resentment, imagine that they can, unrecognized, fish in troubled waters. In the struggle for truth, sharpness is not only a "necessary" but also a sublime evil. Truth can only be laid bare with the sharpest instruments . . .²

2. "War As A Way Out", by Ernst Zander, *Contemporary Issues*, No. 7.

Let us now return to the first page of Ball's "critique", to deal with a "very important" question he raises and re-raises. He writes of Mrs. Millet's essay:

Is she principally concerned with poetry or with the views of the poets on various social and political questions? It is interesting in this connection that in her entire article Mrs. Millet does not quote so much as a single line of poetry! And of her most frequently quoted critic, she says "but into the poetry as such, Williamson barely delves".

Later Ball transforms the "interesting" into the "remarkable": "How remarkable that Mrs. Millet does not feel the need to refer to a single line of poetry in her critique". But a far greater transformation is in store for us, as the "interesting" and "remarkable" become—Stalinism! Ball writes:

Indeed [!], to imply [!] from Eliot's reactionary outlook that his poetry must be bad is to accept the philosophy (though not necessarily the bullets) of Zhdanovism, the totalitarian control [!] of art practised in Stalinist and fascist countries. Zhdanovism evaluates [!] art *solely* on the basis of its usefulness to the State, *solely* in terms of its political utility.

Before going further it is required that we know what Ball understands by poetry. He writes: "Poetry is defined by the use of certain mnemonic devices: rime, alliteration, assonance, meter". Now it is a certain fact that Millet's original article did not so much as mention rime, assonance, alliteration or meter. The answer to Ball's question is, therefore: Millet was *obviously* not principally concerned, she was in fact not concerned at all, with "poetry" as Ball understands the word. To go further, Ball's *Some Comments on 20th Century Poetry* is also not principally concerned with "poetry". A few other comments on Ball's words are in order. First, it may or may not be "interesting" (depending on how trivial one's interests are) that Millet does not quote a single line of poetry. This much is certain: it is not "remarkable", and definitely not an implication of Stalinism. Ball could be shown a dozen other similar articles that quote no poetry, nor does the fact that one does quote poetry prove anything—beyond the fact that one quotes poetry. Ball, who nicely padded his article by quoting a great number of lines of "poetry", was nevertheless, as has been said, not even himself *principally* concerned with "poetry" as he defines it. We may note here, as well, Millet's remark:

George Williamson is one of many who sets about painstakingly to introduce us to the beauties of Eliot. But into the poetry as such, Williamson barely delves. As he says [!], it has already been commented on extensively in books and articles [!]. He proceeds, therefore, directly to the theme or the myth of Eliot's poems . . .

Now notice the difference between someone who is capable of thought and someone who is not: Millet points out that Williamson *barely* delves into the poetry as such. Unlike Ball, however, she does not *wildly conjecture* about the reasons for this, but immediately cites Williamson's own reason for not commenting on "poetry as such". But this is also Millet's reason for the same procedure, as

we should conclude from her phrase "as he says"—which clearly signifies assent.

Inasmuch as Mrs. Millet tells us, in her article, why she does not refer to a single line of poetry and inasmuch as her reason is a perfectly commonsense one with no "implications" whatever, one is forced to conclude: 1. Ball is unable to read. 2. His "conjecture" as to the reason is a forced conjecture, a straining for another smear; an attempt by smelly methods to once again tar Mrs. Millet's critique with the "implication" of Stalinism. It is not going too far, to say that Ball's "reasoning" is typically Stalinist or fascist: a "reasoning" from totally inadequate premises to preconceived conclusions; an attempt, as Ball wrongly says of Millet: "to stretch fact so as to fit a preconceived theoretical [*sic*] framework". We may note here, as well, that Millet does not infer from Eliot's reactionary outlook that his "poetry" must be bad, because she is not at all concerned with his "poetry". Moreover, the confusion of "philosophy" with "control" is typical of Ball: to call Zhdanovism a "philosophy" is truly to debase verbal coinage, but to assume that any philosophy (without quotes) could *control* art is really the limit. Control is control, philosophy is philosophy; to accept the current usage of "philosophy of control" (we have, today, "philosophies" of administration, of public relations, etc.) is to accept the notion of philosophy as a weapon in the service of *those who control*, e.g., to accept the notion that the critical function of philosophy and therefore with the thing itself is finished. Philosophy may evaluate, but it can never control without ceasing to be. On the other hand, it is not true that Zhdanovism "evaluates art", it merely controls it. It is not true that Millet controls art, she merely evaluates it. If Zhdanovism evaluates art solely on the basis of its usefulness to the state then it is not evaluating art at all, unless words no longer have any meaning. Zhdanovism is evaluating usefulness to the state, which is not at all the same as evaluating art. Art cannot be evaluated in this way. Ball's formulation, unless it is the product of an utterly confused mind, is factual acceptance of the totalitarian (instrumental) claim that the product of man can be evaluated (judged, appraised) in so distorted a way. But evaluation is the opposite of distortion. The essence of Zhdanovism is control (suppression, indeed not necessarily, or even primarily by bullets—misrepresentation, threat, slander, censorship are of far greater use); the essence of Millet's criticism—is criticism, not control.

In his next sentence, Ball neatly sums up the case against himself. He writes: "But in fact one does not have to share a poet's religion, philosophy, politics, etc., in order to understand and appreciate his poetry." This quite "interesting", even "remarkable" discovery only means in Millet's case: She does not share Eliot's religion, philosophy, politics, etc., but indeed understands and appreciates at their true value all three plus, etc. On the other hand, Ball, who from all the evidence to be adduced from his article, does share some

of Eliot's religion, philosophy, politics, etc., neither understands nor appreciates all three plus, etc.

Ball's curious position regarding the New Critics' religion, philosophy, politics, etc., is nowhere more clearly shown than in the following passage:

A conspicuous [!] feature of the work of the university poets and critics is an obvious [!] lack of real [!] criticism of the basic things which are wrong with the world. This lack gives the best [!] of the academicians the appearance [!] of knowing a good deal more than they say; and the worst of them, of course, the appearance of knowing nothing at all. [So far, so good. This is exactly. Millet's point.] What social criticism they do have in their poetry serves the objective role of siphoning off critical sentiment which could manifest itself in deeper criticisms. [In the "clear", "precise" language Ball is so concerned with, this would be written: "What social criticisms they do have are shallow".] Among the critics, one finds an odd Aesopian language [people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones!], in which pusillanimous whimperings against "heterodoxy" and "heresy" replace a deeper analysis of culture and concentration camps. [The prior sentence accused the New Critics of *shallow* social criticism, as we saw; now it turns out that the merely *shallow* social criticism consists of pusillanimous whimperings against "heterodoxy" and "heresy". What the hell kind of social criticism, shallow or otherwise, is that?] And one [?] would not expect [!] Eliot (how absurd even to suggest it!), for all his talk [!] of "an unsettled society", to include in his poetry [!] a criticism of the effects of nuclear tests.

We have searched high and low in Millet's article for this "suggestion" but have found it nowhere. In her reply to this essay of Ball's, H-Bombs are mentioned but they are not suggested for inclusion in Eliot's poetry. Therefore, we must conclude that the originator of this "absurd" suggestion is Ball himself! We should, at the same time, notice that Ball finds nothing absurd in suggesting that the critics, interchangeable with the poets as we have seen, analyze concentration camps!

Ball's "curious position" then, once again, consists of firmly settling his behind between two stools: of belaboring Millet's valid criticisms of the New Critics, *because of what he believes her to be*, not because the criticisms are invalid. Quite the contrary, Ball never hesitates to use her arguments, though he never gives her any credit for them. In a word, for him to criticize the New Critics for their social views is fine, for Millet to do so is wrong. On the other hand, his *shallow* criticism is almost always *tempered by inner agreement*.

At the beginning of this piece we wrote:

... objectively speaking . . . Millet's article (whether or not she is aware of this) is anti-Stalinist, just as, objectively speaking, it is Ball who sometimes resorts to Stalinism *in discussion*, though he is an "anti-Stalinist". The label is nothing, the content everything.

The proof has, we believe, been delivered. Ball's smears, equivocations, innuendos, use of double standard, lack of forthrightness and defense of ruling ideology stand in sharp contrast to Millet's forthright attack on ruling ideology. Even if Millet were a Stalinist, her conduct *in this discussion*, the fact that she engages in it in a com-

pletely clean way, distinguishes her expression from the essence of Stalinist "discussion". The latter involves all of Ball's offenses listed above plus a few others reserved for areas where Stalinists are *in power*, e.g., censorship, threat, physical force, all of which constitute the end of discussion (with or without quotation marks) as such. Ball has either a memory "like unto a sieve" or he has chosen to forget that which might have protected him at least from slandering Mrs. Millet:

While objectively one has to call the Stalinists the "most corrupt political grouping", this does not signify that every individual "Communist" is personally a scoundrel. The stress lies on the word "grouping", the quality of which is, in the case of Stalinism, determined by the theoretical, political and methodical corruption and which, as a whole, remains stronger than the *personal* quality of its individual members. In spite of this, the difference between individual and grouping persists and leads sometimes to repulsions, separations, regroupings, and so on. Under capitalist conditions and the fetishization of all things (also of the theoretical and spiritual), still more overstressed by parties, organizations, etc., people know only in the rarest cases what they are doing and by whom they are exploited. On the other side, they learn, in the average, only by dire experience and under the pressure of great, mostly catastrophic events —on the other side, the situation would be hopeless if the contradiction between the individual and the grouping were not kept alive by further objective contradictions.³

3 "The Campaign Against Remilitarization", by Ernst Zander, *Contemporary Issues*, No. 23.

Society on the Couch—Psychological Advertising And The Business Cycle

Woo the consumer and offer him new products. These were the main ingredients for dispelling the recession, presented yesterday by Dr. Ernest Dichter, president of the Institute for Motivational Research. Today's consumer "wants to be wooed," he said. "He wants to be told repeatedly how important he is. Unless there is a real attempt to grant the consumer this self-importance, he may use a recession period as an excuse to punish salesmen for their lack of understanding"

He contended that recessions, like prosperity, were "man-made", and that they were "a reflection of the psychology of people and their outlook on life". Dr. Dichter chided those who subconsciously "are frightened by continued prosperity." "We consider it almost a sin, and many of us felt relieved when the future began to look rough," he said. . . .

Studies by his organization have indicated that consumers sometimes welcome a recession, Dr. Dichter said, because it enables them to assert their importance.

(*New York Times*, 19th March, 1958.)

Paul Ecker

EFFECTIVE PROTEST VERSUS EMPTY WORDS

The leaflet, *African Freedom and the Sharpeville Massacre* written and distributed by the British friends of *Contemporary Issues*, suffers from an ailment unfortunately common in the history of radical democratic protest: Failure to stick to the point. The point, in this case, was the Africans' anti-pass law demonstrations and their brutal suppression by the South African Government. It was *not*, implications of the leaflet notwithstanding, the British Government's declaration of an emergency in Uganda, the partition of Togoland, the suppression of Kenya, the creation of the Central African Federation, or, in summa, London's failure to grant self-determination to its African possessions.

The attempt to "broaden" the issue, to "stimulate" consciousness that "South Africa is not alone", has only one result under the specific circumstances: To direct attention *away* from that sector in which the struggle is, at the moment, being waged; to lessen pressure on the South African Government at a time when it is most vulnerable, and, in the last analysis, to spare the British government exposure of its real responsibility for extending left-handed aid and support to the South African Government *in the given situation*.

Let us examine how this is done. The leaflet's concluding paragraph reads as follows:

We must not permit our protests to be once again diverted [!] into sterile [!] channels. While indicating in every possible way our abhorrence of events in South Africa, we must never allow ourselves to lose sight of the interconnections between events in South Africa and those in the rest of Africa. In the last analysis [!], the only sure way we can help the Africans in South Africa in their struggle against white rule is to demand of the British Government that it put an end to its *own* [original emphasis] version of Apartheid (Partnership) in its own colonial territories by granting Africans *there* [original emphasis] self-determination. The freedom of these territories is the most important single step that can be taken in Britain toward the achievement of freedom, not only in South Africa, but throughout the whole continent of Africa.

A volume could be written on this paragraph, which shows the heart so well-oriented but the head so badly off the track. It falls prey to that all too prevalent of vices: The ultimate solution. This type of panacea prescription, sterile under most circumstances, takes on an absolutely negative character when the crisis arises and it is offered as a substitute for the remedy demanded by the circumstances.

"We must not," says the leaflet, "permit our protests to be once

again diverted into sterile channels." We shall come later to an examination of those channels into which the author warns us not to be diverted, but for the moment let us consider what path could be more sterile from the standpoint of immediate aid to the besieged Africans than trumpet calls for the liberation of Kenya, Uganda, *et al.* The fact that freedom for these countries would indeed strengthen the liberatory movement in South Africa changes the emptiness of this approach not one iota. Of even more decisive assistance to the Africans would be the abolition of production for profit in Britain, "the only sure way" of ending colonial domination, direct and indirect; but the author of the leaflet quite correctly does not raise the point. What is crucial is that there is no focus for either of these "demands", no "channel" narrow enough to assure a torrent of public pressure so powerful that it cannot be disregarded. Instead, the author would have the powerful river of indignation generated by the suppression of the South African demonstrations spread out over the vast plain of colonial exploitation in general, where the governments involved can safely wait until it subsides into the soil of apathy.

The real "diversion" that is taking place is clearly indicated by the formulation, "While indicating our abhorrence of events in South Africa [clearly subordinate, both grammatically and politically—P.E.I.], we must never allow ourselves to lose sight of the interconnections between events in South Africa and those in the rest of Africa". The superior insight into "the interconnection of events" is a poor excuse for losing sight of what is transpiring at the moment in South Africa and of the problem of how most effectively to support those who are struggling there. Matters are not helped any by adding that "in the last analysis" the only "sure" way that the Africans in South Africa can be helped is by the demand for self-determination in Britain's own African possessions. "In the last analysis" the only way that we can "surely" help the Africans is by bringing about the end of imperialism in its entirety; but that day will be long in coming if we do not find some more modest means of assistance along the way. Indeed, at the moment, the South African Government could ask nothing really better than "demands" for self-determination directed to other portions of the continent; it has been trying with might and main to divert attention elsewhere in order to show that it is not the only one with dirty hands and thus lessen what international pressure has developed. The demand for freedom for Kenya, Uganda, Rhodesia, etc., while praiseworthy, is meaningless "in abstract", and appears, in the given context, as mere phrase-making hung on the peg of international indignation over the South African massacre.

Let me recall a somewhat analogous situation and the way that *Contemporary Issues* reacted to it. Russia's bloody suppression of the Hungarian revolt, like the South African brutality, aroused the emotions of the entire world. Demonstrations took place everywhere; but like the British Labour Party leaders in the case of South Africa,

those who led them failed to advance any effective lever to meet the situation. *Contemporary Issues* and those associated with it did not respond by citing "the interconnection of events" between Hungary and the rest of Eastern Europe, between Eastern Europe and the rest of the continent, or between Europe and the rest of the world. It did not warn against "concentrating" protests on Hungary, or spend its time calling for the independence of Poland, Rumania, Kenya, Algeria or Okinawa as the only "sure way" of helping the Hungarians "in the last analysis". It did not concern itself, in the first place, with making sure that responsibility for the Hungarian bloodbath was properly shared all round; it went directly to the point, cutting through all the official tears and hypocrisy, by demanding "simply" that those who were professing so much sympathy for the Hungarians make that sympathy tangible by sending them the one thing they lacked: arms. And since this was the one demand that logically met the requirements of the situation, the failure of the United States government to fulfil it condemned Washington, as surely as Moscow, as co-responsible for the suppression of the Hungarian revolt.

Contrast this approach with that of the leaflet, which indicts the Labour Party leaders for "attempting to contain the indignation and protest in Britain and concentrate it on South Africa [!], where it can obviously achieve least and spend itself fruitlessly". It is as if *Contemporary Issues* were to have arraigned the Hungarian exile organizations for attempting to "concentrate" indignation on Hungary instead of directing it into the more "fertile" channel of protest against British, American and French colonial policy. Had it done so, it could well have been accused by the Hungarians of being the party really responsible for "diverting" attention from where it belonged.

Now what was the situation in regard to South Africa? What was involved, in the first place, was not, as the final sentence of the leaflet implies, a struggle for the "achievement of freedom" for South Africa but only (although a big "only") one for abolition of the hated pass system: A main pillar, to be sure, of the structure of white rule, but still only a pillar, not the structure itself. The fact that much but not everything was at stake for the South African ruling minority made the South African Government particularly vulnerable to pressure, including some generated by those within its own ranks who had begun to question whether the game was worth the candle. The disruption threatened by demonstrations and work stoppages, lacking as they were in preparation and responsible leadership, was enough to produce publicly-noted agitation among the nation's leading capitalists for a relaxation of the suffocating pass restrictions. The sheer brutality of the South African repression, the naked character of white rule, unvarnished by so much as a promise of "partnership", had served to put the Verwoerd government in unprecedented international isolation, making it a pariah with which other governments, essentially no

less guilty, are fearful of openly associating. Under these inviting circumstances, the question that should have presented itself was: How to reinforce this pressure, how to intensify this isolation, if only to make the boot rest a little less heavily on the Africans' neck? Two ways in which this could have been done are mentioned in the leaflet, but one is touched on only in passing and the other is dismissed with a gesture of contempt.

The most elementary demand, under the circumstances, and the one that should have been pounded upon the London government insistently was the cessation of all arms shipments to South Africa. It would have been a fine spectacle seeing the government that denied arms to Castro's Cuba explain why it felt constrained to continue shipping them to a government that could find no other use for them than to mow down its country's original inhabitants. The author of the leaflet recognizes the point when he writes that "an unequivocal denunciation accompanied at least by a clearcut refusal to supply the South African government with any further arms were clearly called for"—but that is the last that is heard on the subject.

The second avenue of pressure inherent in the situation was the development and extension of that weapon for which the leaflet had only scorn: The boycott. This course of action is advanced not without recognition that the boycott is a frequently misused and inappropriate weapon, constituting either a gesture of futility or of spite. Nor is it advocated in the spirit of the Labour Party's apparent call for individual rejection of South African commodities. What was required, what was appropriate, what would have been effective, was a complete moratorium on all trade with South Africa—in a word, economic sanctions. Twenty-five per cent. of South African exports go to the United Kingdom; to shut off this spigot would have produced an unbearable situation for the Verwoerd government, already besieged by panic-stricken business interests. It is difficult to picture it withstanding pressure of this nature for any period of time.

Equally important, the demand for economic sanctions is one which the British government would have been hard put to resist, had it been raised by any significant section of British opinion. Refusal to implement it in the face of widespread pressure would have damned the policy makers more effectively than a thousand leaflets pointing out their failure to give freedom to Kenya, Uganda and Nyasaland. And there are other means of stirring up effective boycott action, such as an embargo by longshoremen—a device that can be spread internationally. The means were at hand; they needed only to be seized with the same initiative that characterized *Contemporary Issues'* action in the Hungarian revolt.

The opportunity to light a torch does not come every day. When it comes, let us not pass it by in favor of a Roman candle.

[The British friends of *Contemporary Issues* accept this criticism and regret, with Paul Ecker and others, the misuse of an opportunity for effective protest.]

EXTRACTS FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH JACQUES TATI*

However astonishing Tati may be as a film producer, we still prefer Tati the actor, and ask him whether the overwhelming success of *Mon Oncle* is due to the fact that nearly all his contemporaries are in reality less happy with the blessings of progress than they appear to be. Tragic reality always lies behind all real humour and it is difficult NOT to recognise oneself in the picture presented by *Mon Oncle*.

"There is probably some truth in what you say," Tati, who is no easy talker, hesitatingly admits. "But I met quite a number of people who venomously reproached me for being against progress. Yes, everything as far as technical and social progress is concerned seems to be all right . . ." says Tati philosophically. "I experienced that myself in America. I travelled by rail across the United States. When I left the train, I stood on the platform, bathed in sweat and gasping for air. An American train is provided with everything. When you smoke a cigarette the nicotine vapours are immediately absorbed by the air. The windows remain tightly sealed and it is unbearably hot, for the Americans like warmth . . . The streets are also artificially heated. One longs for a breath of ordinary fresh air. Physical movement and activity are not needed in America . . . A year or so ago, the gear of a car had still to be changed by hand. A good driver could be recognised by his dexterity in changing from one gear into the other. In those days there was still some sportsmanship about. When a car with a bad driver at the wheel tried to push forward, the car windows left and right were immediately turned down in order to give advice or pass remarks to the driver, male or female. This time also belongs to the past . . . Everything runs now as on wheels, smoothly, evenly and without any interruption. That is technical progress. Man has less and less to do. But what remains of him? I spent a whole afternoon on the important highway between Paris and the Bretagne for *Mon Oncle*, in order to obtain some shots of modern driving. Already then it struck me how sadly and forlornly all these car drivers stared in front of them. Yet, in America it is much worse. There they even resemble one another . . . The same boredom on all faces. The same colour of shirts on Sunday, during the week, in summer or in winter. The same caps, the same gloves, the same hats. The same pattern of ties. The same women next to the drivers. The same children behind them. I am absolutely sure that nobody would notice it, if these women and children were suddenly changed over from one car into the other. An awful psycho-

*This interview was originally published in the Flemish illustrated magazine *De Post*.

logical process is taking place in this modern world of ours. This general levelling out is most advanced in America, the country of the unlimited possibilities.

"Do you know what happened to my assistant in San Francisco? One Sunday morning he took it in his head to go for a walk in town. Outside town he was held up by the police. Somebody walking on his two legs must surely be a suspect. Don't you think that such a state of affairs is rather strange? . . ."

"It would not be easy for you to work or live outside Europe or even outside France?"

"America is interesting . . . for a week-end. I have too many objections. Yet, Americanism is making rapid progress also here. It even worries me. One only has to look around one, and not only in Paris. I got a shock, when I saw last summer how Brussels has developed. All these neon lights, the suspended car roads and the fantastic traffic organisation. The intimacy and dynamism of the past have disappeared. Remember the French pavilion at the Exhibition which filled everybody with enthusiasm . . . Where was the French charm, the Parisian smile, the fantasy and friendliness by which one could always recognise France? Of course one does very little against all that . . . but it is frightening to see how not only people in the same country, but whole countries, are beginning to look like one another. Before, people travelled in order to see something different and to gather new experiences. In this modern world of ours, one encounters everywhere the same types, one being the exact replica of the other. One might just as well stay at home. I told that to your American colleagues. They thought I was a strange person, a real Frenchman. They also found it most astonishing that I had made only three films in seven years. Could I not have earned many more millions? I agreed that this was so . . . Yes, five years ago, I could already have had an electronic kitchen; but this does not interest me much. What I want is a small house, a small car, a small garden and above all, some freedom. That is how I conceive my happiness; yet they did not really understand what I meant.

"You see," continues Jacques Tati, . . . "it is NOT healthy to think only about comfort and wealth and to make this the only goal.

"There is no sense of humour, no variation, no fantasy, no spirit left in this world of ours. This is really serious. People will get bored, they live next to one another without any contact with one another."

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